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University of California/Berkeley
Regional Oral History Office

Mortimer Fleishhacker
Janet Choynski Fleishhacker

FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND THE SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY

With an Introduction by
Allan B. Jacobs

Interviews Conducted by
Ruth Teiser and Catherine Harroun

Copy No. 1



Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr.
Photograph taken during interview



Janet Choynski Fleishhacker
Photograph taken during interview at Woodside

Monday, September 14, 1987

Janet Fleishhacker Bates

Janet Fleishhacker Bates, a prominent San Francisco civic leader, died Saturday, one day before her 79th birthday, at her Woodside summer home. She had been ill with cancer for three months.

A native of San Francisco, Mrs. Bates headed several civic organizations and won high honors from four nations.

She was chairman of the board of trustees of the University of San Francisco and a member of the Board of Overseers of the University of California at San Francisco.

She was president of numerous organizations, including the national Camp Fire Inc. (Camp Fire Girls), American-Italy Society of California, Beaudry Foundation and Children's Theater Association of San Francisco. She served also as vice chairman of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

Among her decorations were the Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Medal, Sweden's Royal Order of the Northern Star, Italy's Stella della Solidarity and France's Officier de l'Ordre du Merite.

Daughter of Colonel Herbert Choynski and Ethel Berger Coe Choynski, she studied at private schools in Paris and Rome and received her secondary degree from Sarah Dix Hamlin School in San Francisco.

In 1929, she married financier Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr., who died in 1976. In 1985, she married William Bates, who survives.

Mrs. Bates served as chairman of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and was vice president of International House at the University of California at Berkeley. She was a board member for the American Assembly at Columbia University, the Institute of Philosophical Research in Chicago, the Bay Area United Service Organization and the San Francisco Chamber Soloists.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Bates is survived by two sons, Mortimer Fleishhacker III and David Fleishhacker, and a daughter, Delia Fleishhacker Ehrlich, all of San Francisco; 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Private funeral services were held yesterday. Inurnment will be at Home of Peace in Colma.

BATES, Janet Fleishhacker — In Woodside, Sept. 12, 1987. Janet Fleishhacker Bates, born in San Francisco, Sept. 13, 1908; daughter of the late Col. Herbert Choynski and Ethel Berger Choynski (Coe); wife of William R. Bates and widow of the late Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr.; survived by her children, Delia Fleishhacker Ehrlich, Francoise and Mortimer Fleishhacker, Victoria and David Fleishhacker, all of S.F.; also survived by 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Private memorial services have been held under the direction of SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL. Contributions may be sent to the Univ. of San Francisco, U.C.S.F. Foundation or to your favorite charity.



MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER IN GOLDEN GATEWAY
He was known in the Bay Area for public service

Mortimer Fleishhacker, S.F. Civic Leader, Dies

By Jack Smith

Mortimer Fleishhacker, who expressed his proud commitment to San Francisco by service and leadership for a myriad of civic and educational organizations, died early yesterday morning. He was 68.

Mr. Fleishhacker, who sustained an initial heart attack two months ago, was fatally stricken at his home at 2600 Pacific avenue.

"The family isn't alone in its loss," said his son, Mortimer Fleishhacker III. "He was completely dedicated to the city."

Mr. Fleishhacker was from a pioneer family easily recognized to San Francisco visitors for the Fleishhacker zoo, named for his uncle, Hert Fleishhacker. But the name was more prominent to those

in the Bay Area for generations of public service.

"You can't freeze a city, you can't stop development," Mr. Fleishhacker said four years ago during his second term on the city Planning Commission. "The city must change, but it doesn't have to change for the worse. Some of the old can be replaced with something better."

Mr. Fleishhacker's grandfather founded stores in the Comstock before coming here in the 1850s. His father, the first Mortimer Fleishhacker, was born in San Francisco in 1866 and founded one of the predecessor banks of the Crocker.

Young Fleishhacker took his degree in economics at the University of California at Berkeley and apprenticed with J. P. Morgan and Co. as an investment banker prior to the 1929 stock market crash.

Mr. Fleishhacker was later with the Anglo-California Trust Co., another Crocker predecessor, and operated his own chemical firm at the outbreak of World War II.

For almost two years — "in a not very important job," he once said — Mr. Fleishhacker worked on the complex communications network under General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific campaigns. He was decorated for his naval service.

Mr. Fleishhacker returned to San Francisco to resume leadership of his own firm, Precision Instrument Co. and the Fleishhacker Box Co., founded by his father.

He headed the United Crusade, helped establish the American Conservatory Theater, did the same for educational television station KQED, where he was chairman of the board for 15 years, and was president of the Bay Area Social Planning Commission.

He was a regent and trustee of the University of San Francisco, president and a trustee of the San Francisco Museum of Art, a vice president of the Symphony Association, a trustee of the Asia Foundation, director of the Crocker National Bank, past president of the board of Mt. Zion Hospital and a vice president of the Natomas Co.

Former Mayor Joseph Alioto appointed Mr. Fleishhacker to the Planning Commission in 1968 and he immediately became an outspoken opponent of proposed monolith buildings he believed would darken the San Francisco skyline.

Mr. Fleishhacker was often an ombudsman to City Hall for the poor and poorly housed and was a zealous advocate of urban renewal while he was chairman of the nine-county Bay Area Council environmental committee.

"It is good business to preserve and enhance the environment," he once said. "San Francisco is one of the few cities worth preserving."

Mr. Fleishhacker also found personal delight in his grandchildren — "I ski with them as much as I can and in the summer swim with them."

Besides his eldest son, he is survived by his wife Janet; a son, David; a daughter, Delia F. Erlich; a sister, Eleanor Sloss, and nine grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held Tuesday at 1 p.m. at Congregation Emanu-El, Arguello and Lake streets, with Rabbi Joseph Asher officiating. Private burial will be at the Home of Peace in Colma.

Donations may be made to personal charities, the University of San Francisco or Congregation Emanu-El.

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PREFACE

The Northern California Jewish Community Series is a collection of oral history interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to Jewish life and to the wider secular community. Sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, the interviews have been produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library. Moses Rischin, professor of history at San Francisco State College, is advisor to the series, assisted by the Center's Advisory Committee: Harold M. Edelstein, Seymour Fromer, Mrs. Theodore Geballe, James M. Gerstley, Professor James D. Hart, Louis H. Heilbron, Frank H. Sloss, and Robert E. Sinton. The series was inaugurated in 1967.

In the oral history process, the interviewer works closely with the memoirist in preliminary research and in setting up topics for discussion. The interviews are informal conversations which are tape recorded, transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity and clarity, checked and approved by the interviewee, and then final-typed. The resulting manuscripts, indexed and bound, are deposited in the Jesse E. Colman Memorial Library of the Western Jewish History Center, The Bancroft Library, and the University Library at the University of California at Los Angeles. By special arrangement copies may be deposited in other manuscript repositories holding relevant collections. Related information may be found in earlier interviews with Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levison, Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, and Mrs. Simon J. Lubin. Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit at The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in recent California history. The Office is under the administrative supervision of Professor James D. Hart, the director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum, Head
Regional Oral History Office

30 January 1971
Regional Oral History Office
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CALIFORNIA JEWISH COMMUNITY INTERVIEW SERIES

Rinder, Rose (Mrs. Reuben R.), Music, Prayer, and Religious Leadership: Temple Emanu-El, 1913-1969. 1971

Koshland, Lucile Heming (Mrs. Daniel E., Sr.), Citizen Participation in Government. 1970.

Koshland, Daniel E., Sr., The Principle of Sharing. 1971.

Hilborn, Walter S., Reflections on Legal Practice and Jewish Community Leadership: New York and Los Angeles, 1907-1973. 1974.

Magnin, Rabbi Edgar F., Leader and Personality. 1975.

Fleishhacker, Mortimer, and Janet Choynski (Mrs. Mortimer), Family, Business, and the San Francisco Community. 1975.

Haas, Walter A., Sr. Civic, Philanthropic, and Business Leadership. 1975.

Haas, Elise Stern (Mrs. Walter, Sr.), The Appreciation of Quality. 1975.

Salz, Helen Arnstein (Mrs. Ansley), Sketches of An Improbable Ninety Years. 1975.

Related information may be found in other Regional Oral History Office interviews with Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levison (Mrs. J.B.), Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Mrs. Simon J. Lubin, and with Harold Zellerbach whose interview is now in process. Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit at The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

INTRODUCTION

(The following introduction by Allan B. Jacobs was prepared from informal comments which were tape-recorded, transcribed, and subsequently revised by Professor Jacobs.)

If there's an example of what the ideal older, established, usually wealthy, public-oriented citizen ought to be and his role in the community, in many ways Mortimer Fleishhacker represents such a person. He does for me at least.

I first met Mr. Fleishhacker in early 1967 at a SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association) annual conference and luncheon. I believe he was president of SPUR then. He gave a party that night for people who had been involved in the conference. At the time, I was the newly-appointed director of the San Francisco Department of City Planning but had not yet started work. I flew from Philadelphia to take part in that SPUR lunch and got introduced to San Francisco. That night I met him, briefly.

The next day, before flying back to Philadelphia where I was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, I called him. I knew that if I wanted to get two top-notch assistant directors to come to San Francisco, someone would have to pay their moving expenses. The City, I had been told, wouldn't do that; San Francisco never did that. So, out of a blue sky, without having been more than introduced to him the evening before, I called Mr. Fleishhacker on the phone, told him my situation, and said I was going to need some money. I told him why I would need the money; could I count on him? It was one of the guttier things I ever did; didn't know him at all, really. And he said yes. He said I could count on him for a thousand dollars or something like that. That was my first experience with him. It was a telephone conversation, and really, in a sense, that started our relationship.

John Hirten, then director of SPUR, had referred to him as "Morty." When I got him on the phone I first called him by the same name, but felt presumptuous. For some reason I've since addressed him as "Mr. Fleishhacker." I'm not sure why. It seems right.

Later, after Mayor Alioto got elected (I hadn't known Mayor Alioto before the election), I went to see him, sensing he was going to appoint some new people to the Planning Commission, and suggested that one such person be Mortimer Fleishhacker. In the very few times I'd met him (once

on the phone, one other discussion that night at his home when I might have talked to him for all of three minutes), he struck me as the right guy, the kind of person I'd like to have as a planning commissioner. I recommended that Mr. Alioto put him on the commission if there was an opening. I didn't know that Fleishhacker had supported Harold Dobbs in the election; I didn't know anything about the previous election. All I knew was that I liked him. And I think it was on my recommendation that Mayor Alioto appointed him.

The first year, 1968, he was simply a member; he held no special office. He later became president. He used to drive me nuts. He would call me two, three times a week and ask me questions. That's about all he would do, ask me questions: "Have you done this?" and "What about such and such?" "Why should we be for this or against that?" "Doesn't it seem like bad planning to...?" "Why did you say...?" It went on and on, especially on matters that were going to come before the commission. I used to spend hours--or what seemed like hours--in never-ending conversations with him on the phone. It took some time to realize what he was doing. In a fairly subtle way--so you didn't understand at first what it was--he was playing devil's advocate. He was asking you all the questions and taking the opposite side to help give him information so that he could take a position on an issue. His tactics, in addition to giving him the information he wanted, helped keep me pretty sharp because I had to have good, convincing arguments for him. That's kind of beautiful because that's what a planning commissioner ought to be doing. Not many do. Not only was he making up his mind in the best possible way, but he was also helping me, and in that way helping the whole department.

He did his homework. I think he read fully damned near everything that we gave him. Sometimes he read the material better than me. He'd then ask questions about it and criticize or say what was good or bad about it. In all the years that both he and I were involved with the Planning Commission, without question no one was ever better prepared than Mortimer Fleishhacker.

We used to have lunch every now and then. Once, on my initiation, a lunch was scheduled just prior to his leaving for vacation, with his wife; they would be traveling across the country and then to Europe. There was no special agenda, just an informal lunch. Coincidentally, two days earlier, I had sent each planning commissioner a draft copy of the proposed transportation plan for San Francisco. Mr. Fleishhacker was going to be out of the country when the matter was going to be considered. We sat down at noon, to what I thought would be a simple, social conversation. It turned out that he had read the plan thoroughly, and most of the lunch was spent answering his questions about its content. The guy had done his homework even then. He left that afternoon.

I recall Mr. Fleishhacker's involvement in our Chinatown planning efforts. We were working with a citizen's advisory committee. These committees are not usually very efficient in their use of time and they don't trust the "establishment" anyway. I wanted some prominent people from the commission--people like Tom Mellon and Mortimer Fleishhacker--to be on that committee so that the people of Chinatown would know we were taking it seriously and in order to convey to the commissioners the urgency of problems in that area. Hopefully people like Mellon and Fleishhacker would work harder to carry out any plans if they were more familiar with the area and its people. I'll be damned if Mr. Fleishhacker didn't show up at almost every meeting, some of them interminable sessions that used to try his patience because of the irrelevancies that came up, because of the personality issues that arose, and because of their length. The people never seemed to get down to business. He was nonetheless at almost every one of those evening meetings. Sometimes he brought his wife, Janet; she would sit there, and I think it was a bit trying for her too, but he was there; he took part. Later on, he was very instrumental in getting some of the plans carried out. He used his influence quietly, I'm sure, with the Republican administration (when few others in San Francisco could talk to the Republican administration in Washington, he still could) to get funded at least one of the projects that the Chinatown people wanted and that had been promised to them. Few people knew he was doing it and he never asked for credit, but, having worked on the Chinatown planning effort, he went to bat to try to make the plan become reality. As the Nixon administration was impounding funds across the U.S., a few leaked out for a housing program in Chinatown. When that project finally becomes reality, Mr. Fleishhacker's efforts may well have been the key ingredient to the accomplishment.

That leads to another example of what I mean by the epitome of the public-spirited, well-placed, elitist, involved citizen. To a high degree, planning is concerned with social change. It is concerned with achieving equity for all people who live in the community. People used to look at our commission and say, "Wow! How representative is that body of the people of San Francisco? It's an elitist group!" They used to look at Morty Fleishhacker as one of those elitist wealthy people who might not care about the people as a whole, especially not the low income minorities. The exact opposite was the case. He's the kind of guy who seems hard to convince that a lot of socially-oriented programs and socially-oriented plans were necessary, but once convinced he was your strongest advocate or your strongest defender, depending on what you needed most. I sometimes got to the point where I would say, "God save me from the New Deal liberal Democrats," of which I am one. In tough cases, when push comes to shove, on matters of socially-oriented plans and legislation, give me a moderate, wealthy, long-established Republican like Mr. Fleishhacker because he may be tough to convince, but once convinced he's going to hang in there with you. The other

guy usually waffles. Mortimer Fleishhacker would never waffle once you convinced him. That's kind of special. I think that in the years that he served on the Planning Commission, while I was there, he probably represented, or could think more equitably and more fairly and more plausibly about the issues of the poor and of minorities than almost any other commissioner. That's a very special guy, and for all those reasons, I think he's a special person; one of the happier relationships that I had in my years as planning director.

I never got to know Mrs. Fleishhacker as well as her husband. One senses that she really spent a lot of time and effort supporting Mr. Fleishhacker and looking after him, and that in recent years she has wanted, in return, more attention to her concerns, and for him to be a bit less involved in civic affairs. I'm not sure of this, though. The lines in her face seem to point upward, they seem to be happy lines. She smiles a lot. She's a vibrant, warm person, I think. I never got to know her as well as I did Mr. Fleishhacker. Pity. But then knowing her husband has been pretty fine.

Allan B. Jacobs
Professor of City and
Regional Planning

May 1975
224 Wurster Hall
University of California, Berkeley

INTERVIEW HISTORY

The interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker were conducted in behalf of Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum by the Regional Oral History Office, which in May, 1973, sent a formal request to Mr. Fleishhacker. On June 11, 1973, there was a preliminary discussion of his interview with him, and several days later an outline of suggested subjects for discussion was sent to him. Eight interview sessions were held between June 21 and August 6, 1973, and a ninth on May 9, 1974. All took place in his office high in the Alcoa Building, San Francisco, overlooking the bay.

Mr. Fleishhacker drew almost entirely upon his memory for the interview, rarely checking records. He read over the first eight sections prior to the concluding session.

The interview with Mrs. Fleishhacker was held in three sessions. The first two, on May 16 and May 21, 1974, were held in an upstairs study in the Fleishhackers' San Francisco home in Pacific Heights; the third, on May 31, at their summer home, Green Gables, in Woodside, in a corner of the large living room. Mrs. Fleishhacker had refreshed her memory by going over family papers and photographs, and scrapbooks of clippings and memorabilia that she has made over the years. She not only discussed subjects brought up by the interviewers, she also brought up additional subjects of interest.

The transcripts of both interviews, with orthographic corrections by the interviewers, were sent to Mrs. Fleishhacker on January 14, 1975. Both she and Mr. Fleishhacker read them, and Mrs. Fleishhacker checked some data in his interview as well as hers, and both added answers to certain marginal queries by the interviewers. On the whole, however, they did little editing. (For Mrs. Fleishhacker's comments upon their editing, see page viii.) The interviewers' editing was also slight, mainly consisting of checking the many names of people and organizations, and details of events mentioned. An indication of the large number of matters discussed in the interviews is the unusual length of the index.

The introduction by Mr. Allan Jacobs was initially tape-recorded in his office at the University of California, Berkeley, on April 25, 1975. He subsequently edited the transcript and re-wrote some sections.

At the request of the Regional Oral History Office, Mr. and Mrs. Fleishhacker furnished the biographical outlines which follow.

Ruth Teiser and
Catherine Harroun

September 1975
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

When the transcript of the interviews went to Mr. and Mrs. Fleishhacker for final checking, it carried with it the usual request that the informal quality characteristic of the oral history memoir be retained, that the language not be formalized. They agreed to comply with the request, but Mrs. Fleishhacker asked that the following statement be included in the completed volume:

In rereading these transcripts, my husband and I have been very conscious of the confused language and apparent disregard for grammatical structure.

Had we written autobiographies, a great deal more time would have been devoted to correct English, proper sentence structure, and a more literary style. The project also would have taken a much longer time.

However, the format of unrehearsed conversations, taped and transcribed, does not lend itself to such careful considerations. And we feel that the result would not have been the same informal, person to person exchange of reminiscences.

This is not intended as anything but a history of our families, as we remember them from hearsay and personal experiences, plus our own recollections of activities in which we have been engaged.

Any attempt to edit them other than for accuracy would no doubt result in a static and even duller account.

We crave the indulgence of any who might care to peruse this material.

Janet C. Fleishhacker

MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER
ONE MARITIME PLAZA - ROOM 1340
SAN FRANCISCO 94111
(415) 981-5912

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Board of Directors, Bay Area Educational Television Association
(KQED)
Member, San Francisco Planning Commission
Trustee, San Francisco Museum of Art
Vice President, San Francisco Symphony Association
Board of Directors, World Affairs Council of Northern California
Board of Directors, California Association for ACT
Vice Chairman, San Francisco Health Advisory Board
Board of Directors, Mt. Zion Hospital & Medical Center
Board of Regents, University of San Francisco
Trustee, The Asia Foundation
Chairman, Committee on Bay Area Environment, San Francisco Bay
Area Council
Berkeley Fellow (University of California)
Chairman of Board, Institute for Philosophical Research
Charter Member, Robert Gordon Sproul Associates (University of
California)
Vice President and Member of Board of Directors, International
House, Berkeley (University of California)

PRESENT BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Board of Directors and Executive Committee, Crocker National Bank
Vice President, Natomas Company
Limited Partner, Golden Gateway Center
Director, Pacific Employers Insurance Company

FORMERLY

Chairman of Board, Bay Area Educational Television Assn. (KQED)
President, Campaign Chairman and Chairman of Board, United Bay
Area Crusade
President, San Francisco Planning & Urban Renewal Assn. (SPUR)
President, World Affairs Council of Northern California
Member, California Arts Commission, State of California
President, San Francisco Planning Commission
Member, San Francisco Library Commission
President, Mt. Zion Hospital & Medical Center
Board of Directors, San Francisco Heart Association
President, Congregation Emanu-El
• Board of Directors, Florence Crittenton Home

x

MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION continued, page two

FORMERLY continued

Chairman, San Francisco Committee on Youth
President, San Francisco Museum of Art
Chairman, Citizens' Committee, United Nations 20th Anniversary
Director, Yellow Cab Company
President, Fleishhacker Paper Box Company
Vice President, Anglo-California National Bank
President, Chemicals, Inc.

Born in San Francisco May 3, 1907
Graduated from University of California, Berkeley, 1927
U.S. Naval Reserve, 1942-45
Married, three children, nine grandchildren
Residence: 2600 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, California 94115

Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker (Janet Louise Choynski)

Born: September 13, 1908, San Francisco, California (Third Generation Californian)

Educated, San Francisco, California; Paris, France; Rome, Italy

Speaks French, Italian, some Spanish

Children: Mrs. John S. Ehrlich (Delia)

Mortimer Fleishhacker, III

David Fleishhacker

Nine grandchildren

Married, May 1, 1929 in San Francisco. Has resided there ever since.

Active in Community Chest, which became United Community Fund, then United

Bay Area Crusade, since 1929; serving on various committees and Board of Directors.

Past Board member: League of Women Voters

Women's Auxiliary, Mt. Zion Hospital

Homewood Terrace (President of Women's Auxiliary for 2 years)

Youth Guidance Center of San Francisco (Founding member, Vice-President)

Childrens' Welfare Bureau

Salesian Boys' Club

Women's Board, San Francisco Museum of Art

Childrens' Theatre Association of S.F. (Vice-President)

Board Member:

America Italy Society of San Francisco (President)

America Italy Society of New York (past)

Bay Area U.S.O.

National Council of Camp Fire Girls, Inc. (President 1969-1972) (past)

International Hospitality Center of San Francisco (Executive Vice-President)

National Assembly for Social Policy and Development, Inc. (past)

Fort Point Museum Association. Now Fort Point Army Museum Association.

Served on Board of San Francisco Council of Camp Fire Girls in 1930s. Inactive for many years, and resumed interest at time of merger of three county councils to become member of newly formed Board of Golden Gate Council.

Active in San Francisco Symphony Association, San Francisco Opera Guild, San Francisco

Ballet Guild, San Francisco Museum of Art.

Member of Advisory Committee, San Francisco Junior League (past)

Recipient of "Stella della Solidarita" from Republic of Italy

"Outstanding Civilian Service Medal" from United States Army

Served as member of "Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services" (DACOWITS) from 1958 to 1961.

Hobbies: Asian art, international relationships, skiing, tennis, swimming, grandchildren

MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER, Jr. (1907-1976)

A Remembrance

by James Day, KQED's first station manager

There were times when I suspected the air of propriety was just a front, bequeathed to him with the famous Fleishhacker name. Beneath the dignified mien, or so I fancied, was another Mortimer Fleishhacker, more gambler than boardroom executive, filled with some of the same high spirit of adventure that drew his grandfather to the boisterous silver mines of Nevada a century ago.

It's the only way I can account for his acceptance of our untempting invitation twenty-one years ago to join the KQED Board of Directors. We had nothing to offer but need. The station was broadcasting less than four hours a day, five days a week, with borrowed studios and cameras, student crews, and a transmitter on the Mark Hopkins Hotel that had to strain to reach Alameda. Moreover, we had just emerged from a fiscal crisis that was almost fatal. He knew all that. And still he said yes.

He brought to KQED assets the struggling station desperately needed: leadership, respectability, and, yes, money. But he also brought a bit of grandfather Fleishhacker's adventurous spirit, though it was partially obscured by the overlay of caution that comes with respectability and position. The uneasy blend of Pacific Heights conservatism with Comstock boldness sometimes produced an interesting result.

I remember mornings when he would call my office to ask if I had seen a certain show broadcast by us the night before. His tone was neither angry nor admonishing, but it didn't take six senses to anticipate the verdict: he didn't like the show. (One particularly quirky series, *Nothing Goes Over The Devil's Back That Don't Buckle Under His Belly*, prompted a phone call nearly every week.) Sometimes we agreed on his verdict; oftentimes we did not. But in either case I would argue public television's need



AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL AUCTION: Ace auctioneer (and then-chairman of KQED) Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr., gets set to sell some waterskis in this 1958 photo.

to experiment, to take risks, occasionally to fail. I doubt that he was persuaded in every instance, but I do know he came in time not only to understand and accept public television's role in risk-taking, but to become one of its staunchest defenders when it did.

Sometime in the mid-'60s I did an interview show with Joan Baez. It was a time when campuses were in turmoil, students were in revolt, and Joan was campus queen—clearly, I thought, not Mortimer's cup of tea as an interviewee. So when his call came the following morning, my mind had already begun to mobilize the *chacun a son gout* line of defense. His first volley took me by surprise. "I saw your interview with Joan Baez last night and was really impressed." And then, in obvious admiration, added, "I'd be proud to have a young woman like that as my daughter." You never could be sure. That's what made it fun.

If there were moments in his long years of service to KQED that gave him the most pleasure, I would guess they were the hours he spent in front of the camera at the annual Auctions, certainly in the earlier years when the challenge was fresh and novel. Once he conquered his innate shyness, he grew to relish the excitement, and even the temporary license we all took in hamming it up a bit for a cause we believed in. For the Fleishhackers it was a family affair, each of them covering key posts on and off camera, vying to outdo each other, while Mortie, pater familias and chairman, presided with a casualness that suited the occasion, but with no substantial sacrifice of dignity to the family name.

Working closely with him one came to appreciate the success with which he kept his optimism under control. Winning his support for your project usually meant surmounting a wall of skepticism that was about as easily scaled as the Transamerica Tower. However, once convinced, he was solidly on your side. His skepticism was a necessary commodity in those early years of painful growth. It gave KQED the stability it needed to survive the naive exuberance of its youth and the obstreperousness of its adolescence.

I saw very little of him in recent years. Our paths rarely crossed after my departure from KQED and San Francisco. But the memory of those years has been kept alive by the gratitude a manager feels for a chairman who responds when help is needed—and leaves you pretty much alone when it isn't. He was that kind of chairman. And if his skepticism left us a little more guarded about our own wild enthusiasms, I'd like to think we left him with a little more play in the rein he held on the adventurer in his soul.

New York, March 1976

INTERVIEW WITH MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER

(Interview #1 - June 21, 1973)

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Interviewer: Would you tell about your grandparents, whatever you know of them?

M. Fleishhacker: I might say that I didn't know either of my grandfathers. They both died before I was born. I knew both of my grandmothers. I knew them intimately. My mother's mother lived to be ninety-two and my father's mother lived to be something over eighty.

Both grandfathers* came out here to California in the 'fifties. My father's mother** was born in Albany, New York and she came out here to get married. My other grandmother*** was raised in Philadelphia. I believe she was born in Germany, but she was raised in Philadelphia. As very often happened in those days, men came out here in the pioneer days and then they went back somewhere else to find their wives because there weren't that many families. One went to Philadelphia to find his bride, and the other one went to Albany.

Neither family originally settled in San Francisco. They settled in other places in California and then came to San Francisco. I'm not quite sure about the dates. My

*Aaron Fleishhacker and Lewis Gerstle

**Delia Stern Fleishhacker

***Hannah Greenebaum. See: Gerstle Mack, Lewis and Hannah Gerstle. [San Francisco]: Privately printed, 1953.

MF: father's family, I think, got to San Francisco probably around 1860 and my mother's family about the same time, or maybe a little bit earlier. I know that my mother's family, before they came to San Francisco, had lived in Sacramento.

One of the reasons they came to San Francisco -- probably the primary reason in those days -- Sacramento used to be flooded by the Sacramento River. There were no levees or anything built, and people got tired after a couple of times being flooded out, so they left and came down to San Francisco. That happened in several cases.

Actually, in those days, San Francisco was not a very important city. It was a port, but other places were almost equally important, being closer to the gold-rush area and to the agricultural area.

But my mother's family -- and this does relate to some of my own recollections -- had a country home over in San Rafael which was called Violet Terrace. It now is a park. It belongs to the city of San Rafael. It was given by my mother's sisters and brothers and herself to the city of San Rafael and it's known as Gerstle Park. I remember growing up over there. There were three pretty substantial houses on the place. My grandmother lived in one with some of her family. One of my aunts lived in another one and another aunt lived in another one.

Int: Who were the aunts?

MF: One was Mrs. Levison,* who recently died just very short of a hundred years of age. She, I think, missed it by about two weeks. She and her husband, Jacob [B.] Levison -- he was born in Virginia City and he was one of the leaders of the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company -- had one house, and they had four sons.** As a matter of fact, that same aunt and cousins lived next door to us in San Francisco on Pacific Avenue. Both those houses are still there.

Int: Who was the other aunt?

*Born Alice Gerstle. See also her Regional Oral History Office interview, Family Reminiscences, completed in 1967.

**John, Robert, George, and Charles; the last, an actor, took the last name Lane.

MF: The other aunt was Mrs. Sophie Lilienthal, Mrs. Theodore Lilienthal, and her husband was a very distinguished gentleman, one of the members of the Lilienthal family. She was the oldest member of my mother's family, and my aunt Alice Levison was about the same age as my mother. My mother* was the youngest of this large family and, as it happened, because of this, my mother being the youngest member of the family, she had, for example, nieces and nephews who were about her age. I now have second cousins who are my age. That was a big family.**

Int: You must have had a lot of related children to play with.

MF: Yes, there were a lot of children. This is about 1911 and '12, because in 1912 my father*** decided he wanted to have a country place of his own and he looked all over the area here and finally bought some property down in Woodside.

WOODSIDE HOME

MF: That house was started in 1912 and finished about a year or so later. I live there now during the summertime. The place is still there and it's quite a fine home.

It was built by an outstanding architect, Charles Sumner Greene, from Greene and Greene. That name probably means something. There's a Greene and Greene house over in Berkeley.**** He didn't build very many things here, and our place down in the country is one of his best examples in northern California. He built a lot of houses in southern California, Long Beach and Pasadena, I think, between about 1900 and 1910. After 1915 he was less active although he lived for quite a long time afterwards. I remember him very well, Sumner Greene; he visited many times. As a matter of fact, he came down and did additional work at Woodside until a year after I married, and he remodeled my mother and father's house in San Francisco.

*Florence Isabelle (Bella) Gerstle Fleishhacker

**For additional recollections of the Gerstle family, see p. 13-14.

***Mortimer Fleishhacker (Sr.)

****2307 Piedmont Avenue



First home of Fleishhacker family. Carrie Fleishhacker Schwabacher was born here. Forrest City, California, 1860.



Greengables, Fleishhacker summer home, Woodside, California.

Int: What sort of a man was he?

MF: Well, he was an interesting man. There were two Greenes. We used to call them "Green Greene" and "Pink Greene." [Laughter] "Green Greene" was Charles Sumner Greene, who was the architect, quite a dreamer and not very practical. Then he had this brother* who was the draftsman and had some idea of figures and so forth, who sort of put the dreams into reality. We never saw very much of him. He was sort of in the background. But Mr. "Green Greene" -- we'd see him quite often.

I remember one thing about him. He was the slowest eater I've ever known, because eating was not very important to him. He used to come for a weekend and my mother would go out of her mind because he would sit with his first course...everybody else had finished, and he hadn't started yet. Then she'd wake him up. He'd be talking or dreaming or something. He was a typical artist, original thinker, and much of his work had a lot of original thought. He was a little like the Frank Lloyd Wright type, although I think his work is much better than Frank Lloyd Wright's -- more practical.

He introduced in architecture very early here some of the Oriental influence. He had studied Japanese art and Chinese art. You can see, in some of his work, a little of the pagoda type lines. He used lots of windows, which was something like the shoji screen that the Japanese used. He was a very innovative architect and I think has had quite a little influence on California architecture.

Int: It's interesting that your father should have gone to him.

MF: Well, my father was a very remarkable man. He liked to do things his way. I mean, he wasn't a follower. He was quite a leader. I'm a great admirer of my father. That was also related to buying this property in Woodside, because, in those days, that part of the world was just -- nobody went there. Everybody lived, if they had a country place, maybe in San Mateo, or Burlingame, or Marin County, or Piedmont. Woodside was pretty far out.

One of the reasons it was difficult to live there -- there wasn't any water there. It was very dry country. So he had to develop his own water system. He drilled some wells and, as a matter of fact, bought a piece of property just to get a well on it and then got the rights to use a small mountain spring there. It was about a three- or four-mile pipeline to bring the water down. We're still using that, although the wells have all dried

*Henry Greene

MF: up and now, in the last sixty years, they've developed a domestic water supply.

He wanted a place with a view, and he bought this property on the top of a hill. There was nothing there but a barren hill. There was a little vineyard there and a little chicken ranch. He assembled five or six different pieces of property, finally, to get about seventy-five acres. Then he got Mr. Greene who, with a great deal of imagination, built a road that ran around this hill, and cut the top of it off and leveled it out and built a terrace out in front of the house. The whole thing, I would say, was quite an unusual, imaginative thing and it stands there today quite a tribute to his thinking.

I could write a whole chapter on Mr. Greene. In fact, there is a young man, whom we've met since then because he's come to see us, who is an architectural historian and is in the process of writing a book on Mr. Greene. He's come to us to get some of the original ideas. He obtained from Mr. Greene's family all his original books of account and sketches and so forth, so it will be quite a good book.

Int: Do you recall his name?

MF: Robert Clarke, of Princeton.*

But, as I was going to say, Mr. Greene, in addition to being an architect, was a landscape architect, although he got some assistance. But he, in general, laid out the form of the garden. We also have some furniture in our house that was made by him. He was a wood carver and there's one room there that's all his wood carvings, plus the furniture, which is in excellent shape -- all handmade.

Then he also was very skilled in ceramics. We have pots and things that he designed and had made to his order. So, he was really the old world type of architect that did everything. Interior design -- oh, he didn't do much of that, but he had some ideas on it, and landscape, and everything that went with it. So I would say he was a very remarkable man.

We moved down there in about 1912 and lived, while the house was being built, in a small cottage that was there. It was the house

*See also p. 76.

MF: of the previous owner of the key piece of property. I remember seeing our house being built, and seeing Mr. Greene up on the roof telling the man -- it's an unusual shingled roof -- how to bend the shingles and put them in place. They steamed them over a pot and then they were bent and laid down, so the roof has sort of the appearance of a thatched roof. But he himself would tell the workmen how he wanted things done and how to do a little carving in the beams and things.*

Some of my earliest recollections are playing down there. That was a sort of a farm, in a way. In those days we had cows and horses. Automobiles were, of course, around, but you still could get around for short distances by taking a horse and buggy. I had a horse and my sister had a horse, and we had two or three work horses. We had a water wagon that was pulled by these two horses and I remember, as a kid, driving the water wagon was a great thrill. Then we used to raise hay for the horses.

As a matter of fact, when the place was first laid out it had a small golf course on it. My father and mother played golf. That didn't last too long because it was quite expensive and hard to keep up, but we had a six-hole golf course on the property and I learned to play golf. But the horses and the cows and the pigs and chickens and turkeys and ducks and pigeons -- the whole thing I remember.

Int: Did you keep the vineyard, or did you take that out.

MF: The vineyard sort of died out. We did keep it for a while. We had, at one time, a French cook who made wine. It was pretty terrible stuff, but she made the wine. We borrowed a wine press. There were some vineyards in the Woodside area. Dr. [Emmett] Rixford -- you'll find his name in the viniculture literature -- had some vineyards down there** and they made some pretty good wine. But our wine was pretty terrible, and we didn't go into that.

When I was growing up as a youngster there, we were very much in the farming business. I mean, I used to milk the cows and we had a cream separator. We made our own butter. That went on for quite a while and then it sort of petered out little by

*For additional recollections of the design and furnishing of the Woodside home, see pp. 74-78.

**La Questa Vineyard

MF: little because it got darned expensive. Nobody wanted to work any more, you know, getting up early in the morning and on a small scale, although it sort of got a little reactivated in World War II, when it was hard to get red points for butter and meat. So we did do a little more of that. I was away during most of the war, but I know that they did have some things. They got some cows.*

I know I'm not giving you the background of the early, early pioneers, but there's not too much of that that I know, except just little stories my father used to tell me about the early days. But the interesting thing to me about that place is that we live there now and we now have three married children with families, and each of them has a house on the place. So, it's a sort of a -- what do you call it? -- clan existence. It's not a feudal existence. They don't have to pay me any rent. But we just finished the third house for my youngest son. He's moved in with his two children this year. My daughter, with her four children, has a house that was originally built for my sister.

Int: What is your daughter's name?

MF: Delia Ehrlich. Mrs. John Ehrlich. She's the oldest of the three, and she has this house that was built by another quite famous architect, William Wurster.

Int: Didn't he build a home for you in Pacific Heights?

MF: He built the house I have in San Francisco, yes. He was a very good friend of ours. He originally came down here, I believe, from Stockton as a young man. One of the first jobs he ever had was the job that my mother and father gave him on this place in Woodside, on the same location where this little house was that we lived in there while the big house was being built. That either fell apart or burned down or something and my mother wanted to construct a little building there as a laundry and for one or two servants to live. Bill Wurster built that. He's told me since that was one of the first jobs he had here, a very modest kind of a job. I've known him all these years since then, since he first came to San Francisco.**

*Our children still had milk from Woodside when they were small, and the chickens, eggs, squabs, butter and milk were available almost up to World War II. JCF

**William Wurster died September 19, 1973.

MF: I was associated with him in the Golden Gateway here. He was the chief architect for that, and I'm one of the limited partners in that and was instrumental, actually, in getting him selected as the architect. So, I've had associations with two people in the architectural field that I think are quite outstanding, both Greene and Wurster.

Bill Wurster was a good friend of the family. When he was a young man, I remember, he came down to Woodside. He wasn't very much taken by the Greene and Greene thing. He had quite a different approach, a much more modern type of thing. But, as time went on, he got much more interested in Greene and did a little research and admired him as an innovative type of architect. Although his work was quite different from Greene's, he still admired him as one of the leading innovators -- because there are so few men in architecture that bring any original thought. Most of them copy somebody else's work. You find these people in time, like Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright and William Wurster and a few others, that do something different and then many other people copy them. There are just not that many new ideas in architecture, and we've had quite a lot of them in the Bay Area that have left their imprint.

Int: In your present home in the city, did Mr. Wurster also use innovative ideas?

MF: Yes. He built, at that time -- and that's 1936 or '37, I guess -- quite a few large homes in San Francisco. It was still possible to build larger homes. Workmen were available. Costs weren't that high. Well, I don't know that it was so innovative. He had certain things that are characteristic -- window lines. He likes large windows, elaborate, with a little more trim and things that have now sort of disappeared, because, as economics get control, why, people leave things out. But it is a house that has quite a few embellishments. It's quite simple, quite plain, but rather rich -- the quality of things that he brought to the house.

One of Wurster's greatest attributes -- he was the kind of an architect that built a house for the people that were going to live in it. He had to know who you were and what you wanted and what your life style was, and then he would sit down and sort of give you what he thought you needed. But if you don't like it you could argue with him about it and he'd change it.

Int: Not like Frank Lloyd Wright?

MF: No, no, quite the opposite. Frank Lloyd Wright never cared whether you lived in the house he built or not, or whether you were

MF: comfortable. He built it for what he wanted. Wurster was quite the opposite. He'd never build anything except what he thought people could really live in.

I don't know whether you want me to go on in a sequence.

Int: Yes.

SCHOOL DAYS

MF: I went to school in San Francisco. I only went to one school, Potter School, which was a boys' private school, started about 1910. I guess I must have gone there when I was six years old, about 1912 or '13. Mr. Potter was a man from Boston, an old sort of traditional school teacher type, and he came out and started this boys' school because there was nothing of that kind.

It was a reasonably successful school. I don't think that the requirements were probably tough enough. They were a little bit easy. In other words, it was for wealthier boys whose parents wanted them to get a good education, but he never kicked anybody out of school if they didn't do a good job, because he needed the money, I guess. [Laughter] But it was a proprietary thing and he stayed with it for quite a while.

I went there. It was a twelve-year stretch. I mean, you went from the first grade through the twelfth. I went through in ten years, because my father had a great idea. He had never had a great deal of formal education, and his idea was that you spent much too much time getting an education, that it didn't take sixteen years to get educated. So he insisted that I get through as fast as I could. I remember I skipped the third grade for some reason or another. I went to the first and second and then I went to the fourth. Then I went through high school in three years by working in the summertime.

I graduated from there in 1923. I was much too young, but my father didn't think so. He thought that, after all, when he was sixteen he was helping to support his family, so he didn't see why everybody else shouldn't. He may have been right.

So, then, my family, when I got out of high school, took us to Europe. Actually, that was my second trip to Europe, because

MF: the first time I was two years old. I went over there in 1909. My family went to Europe and they took me and my sister along because they didn't have any place to park us. I can't tell you very much about that, but I do know I was in Europe in 1909, and then the next time was 1923.

We went over there in the spring, right after school was over, and didn't come back until the following January. We had a very extensive trip and I have strong recollections of that, because you're quite impressionable at that age. We went everywhere in Europe by train and motorcar -- and we spent a month or so in Paris and took an apartment. My father came back, as he had a little work to do, and my mother stayed over there with the two children. We lived in Paris and I learned a little about Paris.

We drove through Italy and Switzerland and, eventually, went to Egypt and spent about three weeks. We went up the Nile in a leisurely fashion on a boat, which was quite an experience in those days. Cook's steamers -- they had two or three steamers and you spent about ten days or two weeks going up the Nile as far as Aswan. Then we came back by train in one night. I have some very vivid recollections of that. It was very impressive and I've never been back there since and maybe, probably, never will.

Then, I came back in January and went to college.

AARON FLEISHHACKER AND HIS FAMILY

Int: Before we get on to your college days, may I go back and ask you something about your father's family? I read somewhere that your grandfather, Aaron Fleishhacker, was known as "Honest" Fleishhacker.

MF: [Laughing] I guess he was an honest man. He had a store somewhere. I'm not quite sure -- Virginia City, or Carson City, or both. I know there's a picture of one of the prints around with "A. Fleishhacker Store." I think it's in Virginia City.

Int: Did you ever hear of that nickname?

MF: I've heard about it, but just sort of -- I guess he was honest.

Int: I guess he was! [Laughter] I read that he was born in Bavaria in 1820.

MF: Yes. It could be 1820. Let's see. My father was born in '66 and my grandfather would have been forty-six years old. Yes, I guess so. When he came out he was a young man. He came out here when he was about thirty years old or less and, I believe, first lived in the South.

Int: In New Orleans?

MF: In New Orleans or somewhere around there, and then came out here about the gold rush time or a little thereafter. My father used to tell me a story about him, and I guess it's a true story, that he used to ride with the pony express around Lake Tahoe from Virginia City. I think the route may have come from Virginia City over the present Highway 50, the Placerville route.

Int: Would it be through Carson City?

MF: Carson City, yes. Carson City, over that way. My father used to tell me that his father told him that he used to ride part of that, with the pony express, on a white mule. I always used to ask, "Well, what happened to the mule?" Well, he slipped and fell in Lake Tahoe and was drowned, or slipped off a cliff, or something. The mule died. My grandfather didn't, but the mule died.

But I always hear this story and I think it was probably true that he used to ride part of that stretch with the pony express. He was in the general merchandise business there in Carson City and, I think, maybe, also in Virginia City, but I'm not sure about it. I guess he made some money selling supplies and things to the miners -- they had these general stores that sold everything in those days -- and then came down here, later, to California, or to San Francisco.

Int: I checked some San Francisco city directories and found that he was just called "merchant" in 1882, but by 1892 it was "A. Fleishhacker and Company, Proprietors, Golden Gate Paper Box Factory," and the partners were Aaron and Mortimer Fleishhacker.

MF: I guess my uncle, Herbert, who was younger, came along a little later. Yes.

Int: Your uncle was called "bookkeeper" in 1892.

MF: That's probably true.

Int: He was younger than your father?

MF: Yes. He was about ten years younger than my father. He was the youngest member of the family. This was also a fairly large family, and I think my father was about number three and between him and Herbert, my uncle, there were, I think, two sisters.

Int: What were the sisters' names?

MF: Well, on my father's side, the oldest member of the family was Carrie Schwabacher, Mrs. Ludwig Schwabacher, who had two sons, Albert and James Schwabacher. Both died a few years ago. She was the oldest member. She was born not in San Francisco. She was born in, I think it was, Forest City or some place like that up in the Sierras.*

(I have an old picture taken of the family in San Francisco in 1890. That is the only picture I've seen of my grandfather, who was a rather short man, and in this picture, he was wearing a high silk hat, which men used to wear there. They walked around in the streets in it.)

Then, next -- I think I have this in the right order, more or less -- his other sister, Mrs. Sigmund Rosenbaum, Emma, who has one daughter living who is my first cousin, quite a bit older than I am. She's about eighty, I guess. She lives down in Atherton -- Mrs. Eli [H.] Wiel.**

Then, Mrs. Scheeline, Aunt Belle -- she was married to a lawyer, Simon Scheeline. There are quite a few other -- some related -- Scheelines. Some of them lived in Nevada at one time. She had one daughter, now dead. I'm not sure whether my father was older or younger than my Aunt Belle.

Then another sister, Mrs. Frank Wolf, who married a New York man and lived in New York -- Aunt Blanche. She had two daughters, who are both living. One of them is living here and is the second wife of Daniel Koshland; that's my cousin Lucille. The other one lives in Washington and is married to Ferdinand Kuhn, who is a former newspaperman, retired.

*See photograph.

**Born Elsa T. Rosenbaum



Fleishhacker Family, 1890

Standing, left to right: Sigmund Rosenbaum, Herbert Fleishhacker, Simon Scheeline, Belle F. Scheeline, Sigmund Schwabacher, James Schwabacher.

Middle row, left to right: Emma F. Rosenbaum, Delia S. Fleishhacker, Aaron Fleishhacker, Carrie F. Schwabacher.

Sitting, left to right: Frank Wolf, Blanche F. Wolf, Albert E. Schwabacher, Elsa R. Wiel, Mortimer Fleishhacker.

MF: Then, my father had two children, my sister* and myself. And my Uncle Herbert had three children, one of whom is living -- two sons and one daughter.** Both sons have passed away. So, of the cousins in that family, there are not so many of them left around.

Int: So your grandfather Aaron Fleishhacker had six children?

MF: There were four girls and Herbert and Mortimer. There are a lot of cousins and second cousins around. It was, at one time, a pretty big family.

I don't know just when my grandfather passed away, but my grandmother*** used to live at 2110 California Street here. I recall going and visiting her. It was a big house, long since torn down.

Int: That was the address in the 1882 directory.

MF: I guess they must have lived there for a long time, because I know my grandmother was still living there, say, around 1910, '12, '13, maybe. Then she moved down to Atherton and lived near a home that my uncle had, and bought an old place there on Atherton Avenue and Fair Oaks Lane, or something they called it then.

I didn't realize the house on California Street was that old, but I remember the house, because it was sort of a Victorian mood. Today they'd call it Victorian. It had long bannisters that came down on the outside -- it was up a couple of flights from the street -- which were brass and I can remember that that was a shiny kind of a thing.

We used to be taken to see our grandmothers at least once a week. That was a sort of a ritual. You had to go and call on your grandmother, whether you liked it or not, because, I guess, a lot of grandchildren didn't like it. But we had to go there anyway, to both grandmothers.

My other grandmother**** -- I guess at about that time, but certainly considerably later too -- lived a few blocks away --

*Eleanor Fleishhacker Sloss, the widow of Leon Sloss.

**Herbert Jr., Allan, and Marjorie (Mrs. Martin Mitau)

***Delia Stern (Mrs. Aaron) Fleishhacker

****Hannah Greenebaum (Mrs. Lewis) Gerstle

MF: that's my mother's mother -- on the corner of Gough and California, which is only a couple of blocks away, on the northwest corner. There were two houses there. She had one and her oldest daughter, Mrs. Lilienthal that I spoke of,* lived in the other one. The two houses were joined. There was a sort of a passageway that went from one to the other and they were on the corner, with a garden in the center.

Int: Is one of those houses still standing?

MF: No, they were both torn down at the same time. There's some ticky-tacky apartments there. That's the northwest corner of Gough and California.

THE FLEISHHACKER PAPER BOX COMPANY

Int: Your father and uncle, then, worked with their father for a while?

MF: Yes, in this Fleishhacker Paper Box Company.

Int: Have you ever heard why your grandfather started that?

MF: Well, it was quite a business in those days. I know about the history of that. I've got some old stuff around. In fact, I later became president of the company and, as I told you before,* finally sold it out to the Lord Baltimore Press. So that stayed in the family from whenever that thing started there, and went through several generations.

Int: I've read that 1874 was the date it was established. Does that sound right to you?

MF: It may have been. The paper box business in those days was quite a business, because paper boxes were used for a variety of things. For example, shoe boxes. There were shoe factories in San Francisco. Buckingham & Hecht was one of them. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Wiel's husband was the president of the Buckingham & Hecht shoe factory.

*Page 3

**In a preliminary discussion of the interview.

MF: But there were a lot of shoes manufactured here, and every shoe went into a shoe box.

They even made boxes for filing papers. They were stiff paper -- they looked sort of like a book. You may have seen them. There are still these old things around. You opened the end of it and put papers in. They didn't have steel filing cases. These things would stack upright.

Well, they made those kind of things and, oh, a great variety. Of course hat boxes. These were called stiff boxes. They weren't folding boxes. They were made by hand. I guess there's no such thing as an old-fashioned hat box any more, that's sometimes round, sometimes square. But most merchandise was packed in those kinds of boxes and then, later on, they got into the folding box business, which is the regular clothing box. It's folded up and you open it up to put the garment in. It's made by machinery. But this was mostly hand labor, with a few machines.

Int: What kind of laborers were used in that factory? Were there Chinese?

MF: Well, I don't know. I don't think there were any Chinese. Well, I can tell you one of the men that I knew. When I got along, many of the employees were old. It was an old firm and it was a family firm, and nobody ever got fired unless they died or stole something. The manager of it -- my father and uncle having moved on to other things -- was a man by the name of Willy [William] O'Donnell, which would sound like he might well have been Irish, and he was. He was a great old guy. He had started there as the office boy and later became the manager. I knew him, and when I was running the company, he retired and moved down to Carmel; some years ago.

But there were Irish. There were quite a lot of Irish in San Francisco. Later on, there were more and more people working in that factory and a lot of girls worked there, because there was a lot of hand work of pasting the paper on the boxes and closing it with little, small machines. They made the corners and stapled the corners. Many of them were from Central America.

As a matter of fact, I met a man here the other day who told me he worked there, Mr. Majeski. He's involved with the economic opportunities program here. He said he worked there as a young man. I don't remember him, but he remembered me. Quite a few people from Salvador, Guatemala, and even Mexico -- but I don't remember any Chinese ever having worked there, but there may have

MF: been. I don't think that Chinese went in for that kind of work very much. They did a lot of garment sewing, other than the agricultural thing, which a lot of them worked in.

My father was in that business. It was a fairly good business. Then he went into partnership, took a half interest, with a man by the name of Fred Kewell, who had a paper box business over in Oakland called the Oakland Paper Box Company, which is also out of existence. Then, he, Kewell, had two sons and one of the sons went down and opened a paper box business in Los Angeles, which got to be the biggest of all of them. This young man (well, he was young when he started; he only died last year) was about my age, maybe a few years older, the younger of the two sons. He was quite successful in this Los Angeles Paper Box. He not only went into the box business, but he went into the board business, that is, making the product from waste paper and pulp and things that make the cardboard from which a lot of the boxes were made. It was never a big company, but it was quite successful.

I had an interest in that, inherited from my father. Well, I didn't inherit it, as a matter of fact; I bought it from him and became an officer of that Los Angeles company. I used to go down there, oh, once a month or so. At one time I was fairly active in that business. So, one way or another, through three generations, the family has been in the paper box and the paper company.*

My father was also a director and, I think, one of the founders in a way, of the Willamette Paper Company, or Crown. It was Willamette and then Crown, which became Crown-Willamette, which then merged with Zellerbach Paper Company, and is today Crown-Zellerbach. So he was involved in the early days of the paper business. Their businesses were up in Oregon and Washington and, later, in Canada and he was a director and stockholder of the Crown-Willamette Company.

ELECTRIC POWER COMPANIES

MF: One of the other early California men, Louis Block -- I don't know whether that name means anything -- was the president of either the Crown or the Willamette Paper Company and also was associated

*See also pp. 90-92.

MF: with my father in the founding of this chemical company, the Great Western Electro-Chemical Company, which I think was in that business that you sent me.* That was one of the first chemical companies that was started out here on the west coast, just about or after World War I. One of the things they made was chlorine gas, which was much in demand by the military in World War I, and they made other chlorine products. That company now belongs to the Dow Chemical Company, and I was on the board of that company as a young man. My father put me on the board.

That was related to my father's connection with the electric power business. He had been involved in starting some small electric power companies for the miners up in the Truckee-Reno area and around there.** Electric power, generated by water, was a fairly new concept. How he got involved, I don't know. I think he was a fairly successful businessman in San Francisco and he was approached by various interests to put this thing together. I remember his telling me about -- everybody knew that you could make electric power by falling water, but there hadn't been very much of it done. They'd done it in Italy and he made some studies of what had been done over there. He wasn't an engineer, but he got associated with some engineers. Then, having done that, there was a group of New York people who had started a company called the Western Power Company, headquartered in New York, and they had purchased the water rights on the Feather River. All of this now is part of Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

My father got involved and was selected as the president of what was called the Great Western Power Company. In those days there were lots of little power companies. Now, you know, for this area, there's one power company, one electric company. But then, there were many of them. Every town, every community almost, had its own company. There were two or three of them in San Francisco, competing, like the old story of the milkman routes that went down the same street and each one had a different -- I mean, you learn that in economics class, that it's a very inefficient way of distributing milk to have each one stop.

But it was very inefficient. They had their power lines. It'd be three different companies along the same street, each

*Outline of suggested subjects for discussion.

**Truckee River General Electric Company and American River Electric Company.

MF: trying to solicit the business from the customer, both the domestic and the industrial. But the Great Western Power Company's principal competitor was the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. But Great Western was one of the first out here that got practically all their power from water power, and they had to bring it from way up there. At the time my father first got connected, they had one power plant on the Feather River, which was controlled by Lake Almanor, in Plumas County, which had been built. That was the great "Big Ben" power house.

There was an engineer, and I'm not sure he was the principal engineer, a man by the name of Howells -- I remember him -- who had seen this Feather River as a great potential.* Now on this same river the water is impounded up at the top there by Lake Almanor, an artificial lake with an earth dam. They re-use the water. I mean it goes through the power plant and then, further down the river, they have another power plant. I think they've got about six power plants on this river, and it eventually gets down to the Oroville Dam. That's a government dam, but they re-use the water power down there to produce electricity.

Int: Do you recall also City Electric Company and where it fits into the picture?

MF: I'm not quite sure but I believe it was absorbed by Great Western Power.

In those days the electric power business was a very hazardous business because, in the first place, it was competitive. You had to sell your product. This is all leading up to this Great Electro-Chemical Company. One of the reasons for starting that company was that they had a surplus of power at certain times of the day, and they were looking for industries that could use power. This particular kind of business, the production of chlorine products, used a great deal of electric power, because you start with salt and make a brine and then, through a process of using electrical power through a system of cells, you get, by putting electricity into the brine, chlorine and caustic soda and then, from that, a variety of by-products.

Int: I see. That's why "electro" chemical.

*Julius M. Howells. See, for data on Howells and other aspects of California electric power history, Charles M. Coleman, P.G.&E. of California; McGraw-Hill, 1952.

MF: Great Western Electric is at Pittsburg, California. Louis Block, who I mentioned earlier, was one of my father's associates. I remember the thing very well, because the man my father engaged as manager was a man by the name of John Bush, who was supposed to be a chemist, but he wasn't a very good chemist, and everything went wrong with the thing. The product didn't come out, and then the war was over and there wasn't much demand for chlorine for that purpose.

But now, of course, it's used extensively for water purification, and in the paper industry. That's one of the reasons Mr. Block was interested, because he was associated with paper, he hoped to get a supply of products used in the paper industry. Now the company makes maybe twenty or thirty different products, but the chemical industry in those days, around World War I, in California was a very infant industry. In fact, the United States was not very sophisticated in the production of chemicals. Germans were the ones that had the chemical business and, of course, World War I cut off all the supplies, and the United States did really start its chemical industry during World War I.

That company was, as I say, in the early days, very unsuccessful due to bad engineering and a lot of people that were in the business didn't know what they were doing. Later on it became quite successful. My father got another general manager by the name of J.F.C. Hagens, who was a good businessman, and then got some very skilled chemists.

This Great Western Electro-Chemical Company became quite a successful company. There were several eastern chemical companies that wanted to get established in California. This was all in the '30s. Well, that's a long time ago in a way. Both the Monsanto Chemical Company and Dow were interested in buying this company because they wanted to get a base on the west coast, particularly in the Bay Area. So they were anxious to buy it. I say that because, at that time, there was a period in which eastern concerns were getting more and more interested in the California market. It had previously been considered so far away.

Of course, in the late '20s and '30s and ever since, California has become the biggest state. It wasn't by any means the biggest state then. It was just 'way out west and nobody paid much attention to it. But there was quite a lot of this at that time, of eastern companies coming out here and acquiring companies and, in a sense, similar to quite a few years later, when I sold this Fleishhacker Paper Box Company to an eastern company who were interested in the market.

MF: There are still many locally owned companies here, but you don't realize that there were a lot of small local companies which were bought, like Folger Coffee Company. I don't know whether Hills Brothers is still a family company, but I think they may be. But there have been many instances where some of the early California families built up businesses and later sold out to national companies, because we have so much more communication with the rest of the United States. Even Safeway company started here in the East Bay as a small, little local chain, and there are many instances of this, as I say.. California has now become part of the whole national market, though it was pretty isolated in those days.

Int: What happened to the electric power interests?

MF: Well, on that we'll have to go back a ways. It was a logical thing to merge that with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. It was very illogical to have these competing companies. That merger was through a combination. It wasn't a direct sale. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company absorbed another company -- the South San Joaquin Power Company, which was down in the San Joaquin Valley -- and the Great Western Power Company. Now the Pacific Gas has everything in northern California, north of either Bakersfield or Fresno.

So my father sold that out. He didn't actually ever own an awful lot of that stock. He was the president of the company.* But I think that merger or sale took place along in the middle or late '20s. I know it was before I went to New York.

Int: And your father held, then, no more power company interests?

MF: No, he got out of that business entirely and then most of his business affairs were connected with the banking business. He had been both in the power business and in the banking business at the same time.

Int: How did he get into the banking business?

MF: My uncle actually got into the banking business before my father did, and partly through some of his family connections.**

*From 1912 to 1924.

**Herbert Fleishhacker's father-in-law, Sigmund Greenebaum, was president of the London, Paris & American Bank, Ltd.

MF: My father got in the Anglo-California Trust Company, which was a successor of the -- oh, I don't know, Germania Bank and several other Swiss-American banks. He got in the banking business, I guess, about 1912 or '13, maybe a little before that. I know that he was quite active in the banking business and the bank had become a fairly important institution in 1915, which was the year of the Panama Pacific Exposition, because they were the only bank in the Exposition area; they had a branch bank there.*

BOYHOOD RECOLLECTIONS

Int: I notice your father was on some of the boards for the Fair, of course.

MF: Yes. Incidentally, as far as recollections of early childhood, I remember that so well, the 1915 Exposition. We used to go there almost every day and we even had a book of tickets with a year pass or something.

Int: Did you ride the cable car down the Fillmore Street hill?

MF: Yes, or we used to even walk. In those days, people walked a little bit. I lived on Pacific Avenue. It wasn't that far away. And then the Geary, which became the Van Ness Avenue streetcar -- that was when the municipal railway started. They ran these gray cars that went down Van Ness, and went to the east end of the fairgrounds. Around where Fort Mason is now was the east entrance to the Exposition. It started about Van Ness and then went all the way out to where Crissy Field is. That was all, of course, filled in.

I remember before the Exposition (I don't know how I remember all these things; I must have been about six years old), we used to go down to that area, which was sort of a shoreline beach, because the water came up to about Lombard or Chestnut Street and meandered along there, and then that was filled in, where now the Marina Green runs, and that formed the base of the fair grounds. We used to go down there and sort of play around the beach, and there used to be

*For additional recollections of this and related banks, see pp. 24-26 and 55-57.

MF: a few early pioneers in aviation that used to land their airplanes along there, because there weren't very many places you could land an airplane. Also out at the Ocean Beach they used to fly. Of course, aviation, really, had started long before that in Europe, but there wasn't much here.

Int: It must have been exciting for a boy.

MF: Yes. During the 1915 Exposition, one of the things that was quite remarkable was that they used to have fliers there who did the stunt flying, even at night time. One of the famous aviators of that time, Lincoln Beachey, was killed there. He went down. Then there was another stunt aviator at that time by the name of Art Smith, who became quite famous. I don't know whether he's in the literature. I remember I even had a horse that I called Art Smith, because he was the local hero at the time. But I remember these early airplane nuts.

Of course, these airplanes were all made out of piano wire and bamboo and fabric they used to coat with glue. They were biplanes, mostly. Once in a while there was a monoplane. But I remember the early aviators: Lincoln Beachey, who was killed, Art Smith, the Christofoson brothers, and another one -- I think his name was Harry, but his last name was Purcell.

Interestingly enough -- and I'm rambling around --

Int: Fine!

MF: This fellow Purcell was a friend of the chauffeur of my grandmother, who lived over in San Rafael. This chauffeur, whose name was Al Gould, built an airplane. As long as I can remember, he was always building an airplane in the garage there. It was originally a stable. I don't think the thing ever flew, but he was always tinkering with it and changing it and building it. He was a craftsman. The chauffeurs in those days were the men who drove, and a chauffeur was usually able to repair an automobile and had some mechanical skill. And he was building this airplane, just putting the finishing touches on it and then he'd change it. I think he tried to fly it once, but it never flew, as near as I can remember. [Laughter] As a youngster over there I used to always go down; it was interesting to see an airplane being built in your own back yard.

There were a lot of amateur aviators and, really, nobody knew very much about aerodynamics. They'd copied what somebody else had designed.

Int: Children were freer to roam, were they, then? Did parents feel safer about children?

MF: Oh yes. I think you could turn kids loose, even in a city. We lived right on Pacific Avenue. Most of the houses right around there now were there then. There were a few empty lots and a few houses that were torn down and rebuilt. Particularly, there wasn't much automobile traffic. Nobody was going to get run over, because anybody that drove an automobile drove along at ten miles an hour. There were quite a few horse-drawn vehicles, in my recollection. The milkman always had a horse, and the butcher used to deliver with a little cart. The ice, the coal, and the wood -- they were all delivered by horse-drawn vehicles and even some of the moving vans had horse-drawn vehicles before automobiles. It was sort of a mixed economy between automobiles and horses. Automobiles were coming on pretty strong. I'm now talking about, maybe, 1912, '13, or '14. Horses gradually phased out, but some of these horses stayed around for quite a while. It was just more practical to have a horse and buggy than to have an expensive automobile, and the horse did all right.

Kids could wander around. We used to walk around there, and walk around the city, and ride the streetcar. On Pacific Avenue there was a streetcar. We used to go to school on it, or walk, or ride our bicycles, or roller skate. It was all quite easy to do, particularly in the country. Talking about San Rafael -- you could just go anywhere there, because, really, it was the automobile that later made areas unsafe. There just weren't very many automobiles around. The streets were narrow and mostly dirt streets in the country, so nobody drove very fast.

The interesting thing about Marin County, in those days -- now, I'm talking about before 1913 or '14 -- there was a very fine electric transit system that ran from Sausalito to San Rafael, Larkspur, Corte Madera, Ross Valley, and San Anselmo. There were two lines.

Int: You can still see the right-of-way some places.

MF: Yes. You talk about rapid transit! [Laughter] We had rapid transit over there sixty years ago and it was pretty good. It took about an hour to get to San Francisco from San Rafael and the trains went every twenty minutes or so. Of course, trains lasted in the East Bay even longer than that. But I remember my father and my uncles and others that lived there would take the -- I don't know what they took -- I guess, the seven o'clock train, and that would get

MF: them over to San Francisco about eight. To go home they'd take the ferry boat to Sausalito at five and get home at six o'clock. It was about the same as today. [Laughter] I mean, you got there just about as fast!

It's coming a sort of a full circle, as far as that's concerned. Now it's busses and ferries. But then you had ferries. You didn't have busses, but you had these electric trains, which weren't very elaborate. They were sort of ramshackle things. They made a lot of noise, but they ran along at forty or fifty miles an hour. There wasn't a very big population over there, but everybody seemed to get by all right. They'd either walk to the station or drive, or have somebody drive them. Things were a little more leisurely. That extra half hour or fifteen minutes that you didn't have --

Int: But still the working day you described was a longer working day than we have now.

MF: Oh yes. Well, there was a longer working day and, of course, pretty much a six-day week, or at least a five-and-a-half day. There wasn't, I don't think, a five-day week. I remember working, when I was a young man, in the bank. We worked Saturday mornings. The banks were all open on Saturdays, and sometimes you got through at noon but sometimes you didn't get through till two o'clock in the afternoon. That was the regular thing. All banks were open five and a half days a week, and all other business establishments worked on Saturdays.

EARLY FAMILY BANKING INTERESTS

Int: You mentioned that the Anglo-California Trust Company had an office at the Fair.

MF: Yes.

Int: Was that one of two affiliated banks?

MF: There were two banks. One was known at that time as the Anglo and London-Paris National Bank, which was a national bank. The Anglo-California Trust Company was a sort of a related institution. There was some similarity in directors and stock ownership. It was a state bank. The reason for that was that in that time, under the law, national banks could not do certain types of business that state banks could. Namely, they couldn't have a trust department.

MF: Later on they were allowed to. Now there's no distinction at all. This was even before the Federal Reserve system was established.

But state banks were set up as subsidiaries -- not always as subsidiaries, sometimes as, oh, sort of coequal banks -- to do those things. National banks didn't take savings accounts; they didn't pay interest on savings accounts. The Anglo-California Trust was a savings and trust institution. So was the American Trust, which is now part of the Wells Fargo Bank. Wells Fargo Bank was a combination of the Union Trust Company and the Wells Fargo Nevada National Bank. As things went on, they merged.

One reason for the two institutions was that the National Bank Act did not allow national banks to have branches. They'd only have one location in a community, and state banks could have branches. So it was the branch banking system, the trust business, and the savings business that made the state bank a necessary adjunct. The other, national, banks were commercial banks and could do international business and certain other activities.

Int: Were those two organizations locally organized?

MF: Yes.

Int: Were there European or eastern interests involved?

MF: Well, there were some original European interests. The Anglo and London-Paris National Bank, which was a mouthful, was a combination of the London, Paris, and American Bank and the Anglo Bank. Both had their beginnings with some foreign firms who had merchants as representatives.

In the early days, of course, a lot of companies did a sort of a banking business. In fact, when the Wells Fargo really got into it, they'd hold gold. They'd keep it for a man and give him a receipt for it. So that was a sort of a banking function, and there were these private banking operations. And this was really because in the early, early days, there really wasn't any national banking system. The laws were very loose. Almost anybody could go into banking. Then, as this thing became more sophisticated, there were certain things that banks could do and other people couldn't do.

So a lot of the banks were the outgrowths of foreign companies that were set up here, trading companies, or merchants who did a little banking business and then started a subsidiary bank.

MF: Then, as things became more sophisticated, they couldn't do both and they set up the bank as an independent organization.

Int: Then it was your uncle, Herbert Fleishhacker, who first got interested in that kind of thing?

MF: He, I think, got into the banking business a few years before my father. My father was very active in the power business in his early days. My uncle went into the banking business earlier.

Int: But then your father did go into the banking business, of course.

MF: Oh yes. And then these two banks were later merged and at one period my father was the chairman of the board and my uncle was the president. Then they retired, and various things.*

COLLEGE DAYS

Int: To go back, then, to your college days --

MF: Well, that takes me back to about January, 1924. I came back from Europe and went to Berkeley. There again, I was half a year behind, so I made up the half a year by going to Stanford for a summer quarter one summer, and caught up those extra grades. We lived down the Peninsula and it was a little easier to go to Stanford. It was a little complicated to integrate the quarter system with the semester system. I remember very well going to both at the same time. I was taking finals at Stanford and registering at Berkeley. I used to drive. I'd spend half the day down there taking the finals -- well, it worked for about a week overlap.

Int: [Laughter] This was still because your father thought you ought to hurry up and get through?

MF: Yes. No use fooling around. [Laughter] I went to school for ten years and college for three and a half years.

Int: There must have been a startling contrast between Stanford and Berkeley.

*For additional banking material, see pp. 20-21 and 51-57.

MF: Yes. I thought the Stanford summer quarter was pretty easy. The summer quarter always was and maybe still is a little less sophisticated. It was interesting because there were some visiting professors that they had. I remember I took a course in chemistry from a Scotchman who was fascinating because he had a marvelous Scotch brogue, and I guess it was sort of the British way of teaching. I mean, "Here it is. Do whatever you want and you'll have a final, and you don't have to come to class." You really relax. So it was rather interesting.

I enjoyed it, but it was a little bit tense when it got, finally, to where I was taking finals in one place and registering and going to courses over in Berkeley. I've forgotten what year I did that and caught up. I guess it was my second year, because I had to catch up to get my what they call a junior certificate. I must have done it at the end of my freshman or at the end of my sophomore year. So it was about 1925.

Driving from Palo Alto to Berkeley was a pretty good drive. I think there was the San Mateo Bridge. I think I used to drive across the San Mateo and then up the East Bay. It took a couple of hours to go up from Palo Alto to Berkeley.

Int: Did you enjoy college?

MF: Well, in a way. I don't think I was wildly enthusiastic. I sort of rushed through there. I was pretty young. I went in at sixteen (well, I was sixteen and a half) and I got out in three and a half years. I enjoyed it and I can recall a few outstanding professors.

I started in, as the result of my father's wishes, in civil engineering. He thought he wanted to have somebody in his family who was in engineering, because he'd had this background of being in businesses that related to engineering -- the chemical business and power business -- and he'd never had any of that. He thought at that time that there was a great future in engineering.

So I took one semester of it and then I decided that I wasn't cut out for engineering. The mathematics I found very easy, but there were a lot of things you had to do. You had to take a course in pattern making, which was shop work, and I wasn't too skillful with my hands and things of that kind. So I switched after the first semester to major in economics, which allowed you all kinds of latitude. I don't know what it is today, but you could take history, philosophy -- it all counted for your major.

MF: I don't know whether they even have majors any more in college.

So I took quite a few courses. I took the minimum amount of economics that I could get by with, which was not a very interesting subject, but not bad. I mean I don't regret it because I took some courses in accounting and statistics, and things like that, which have served me fairly well, and then quite a few courses in history.

We had a very good history department over there, particularly South American and Central American -- [Herbert I.] Priestly, and [Herbert Eugene] Bolton, who was the head of the department. I remember taking a course from him. He was quite an interesting man. Both those men were among the best in the country in Latin American and early western history.

I took a course in philosophy and got introduced to the subject, in which I've been interested ever since. [Jacob] Loewenberg -- I don't know whether that's still done, but the head of the department very often used to teach the basic freshman course. These distinguished men very often taught the freshmen, and that was quite an experience in the, I guess we'd say, basic course. I think it was Philosophy 4A, but I've forgotten. Then I remember also taking a course in anthropology from Professor [Alfred L.] Kroeber, which was also quite an experience. These are all quite distinguished names today, and were even in those days.

Well, I dabbled in these subjects. To me, that was about all -- well, I wouldn't say it's all. But I try and tell my grandchildren about this -- that one of the opportunities you have is to learn about a subject. I mean, you learn to know what it is. I didn't know what anthropology was. At least, I learned what it was and, if you were interested, you'd go out and learn more about it. I certainly didn't know what philosophy meant when I was a freshman in college, but I took a couple of courses in it.

Another thing I remember, my father -- I keep talking about my father; he was a very strong influence on me. Two things he thought were important about a college education: that you learn something like engineering or some specific skill, and public speaking. He always felt that he wasn't a very good public speaker, but he was called on very often to make public speeches. So he insisted I take all the courses I could take in public speaking. There weren't very many of them, but there were a few. You learned the techniques of how you prepared an outline and in part of one of the courses, you had to get up and speak in front of the class. Now, I must say I've found that has stood me in very good stead, to be able to speak

MF: on your feet and think. I don't know. Young students today don't seem to have much trouble. They can all talk. [Laughter] They talk too much and don't say anything. But that was something I certainly got out of college -- and the association with distinguished professors.

I wasn't an athlete. I was too young and too small to get into that, but I went out for a few things.

MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER, SR.

Int: Your father was a member of the Board of Regents at the University of California. Was it later, or was it while you were in college?

MF: No, no. He was a regent long before that. Some place I have some record, but I know he was appointed by Governor [William D.] Stephens, and that would have been around World War I. Then he was reappointed by Governor [James] Rolph. It was sixteen-year terms, and he was reappointed. I'm not sure whether they were full terms, because sometimes there's a vacancy. I'm not sure he served the second full term, but practically. It was over thirty years he was a regent.*

Int: Did he talk much about it?

MF: Oh yes. That was one of his greatest interests. He was very interested in the University of California and, as he had time, he used to go to some kind of a meeting of a committee about once a week, at least every two weeks. And they were the finance committee and, I remember, the Lick Observatory committee. We went down there a couple of times and spent the evening there and looked through the telescope. Very interesting.

I learned a lot and heard a lot about it. The University had, really, one campus -- Berkeley -- and it had what was known then as the southern branch, before it became UCLA. It was a little cottage down there. The Board of Regents used to meet in Los Angeles, I think, once a year, in deference to the fact that they had something down there. Well, they had that branch and then, while he was on the board, of course, UCLA came about.

*From 1918 to 1950.



*Edward Weston
1906*

Bella Gerstle Fleishhacker



Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr.

MF: I think even in the early days they had something at Riverside. That was something to do with the agricultural extension. They had this what they called a citrus extension depot. Then, the Scripps School of Oceanography also existed, so the University had some things down there. And then Davis, of course, was just a small agricultural school.

Int: I should ask you several other things about your father's activities. In World War I, I found, he was head of the exemption board.

MF: Yes. That was sort of a draft board thing. But his principal activity in World War I was in connection with labor disputes. He was an arbitrator, and the board of arbitration had lots of labor disputes during World War I, as there have always been in the shipping industry, and all these things. He was very active.

Int: I see. That was before the Federal Mediation Service, or whatever it was first called?

MF: I think so, yes. They had some sort of ad hoc groups that they formed around the country, and I believe there was something here. It couldn't have been under the Department of Commerce, because there wasn't any; it was Labor and Commerce until Hoover.

Int: Federal mediators were --

MF: I think he was appointed by the president or by the head of the Labor Department as the local arbitrator, and he had a board with several other people on it. They used to hear these labor disputes and try and arbitrate or mediate. I remember his being very occupied. I mean, he used to come home at two o'clock in the morning and work on Saturdays. These marathon sessions went on even then in trying to settle employment and labor disputes.

One thing I remember that a lot of them had to do with -- we had a ship-building and ship repair activity, the Union Iron Works, in San Francisco. It's still there, but it's under another name, Bethlehem Steel. I remember that he came home one time and he was very proud and very happy. He had been made an honorary member of the Boilermakers Union, because there was a settlement of a dispute. After he settled it, they made him an honorary member of the union and he got a button. I've got it at home some place. You know, these little round buttons that you see the union men wear. He was very pleased at being an honorary member of the Boilermakers Union. He was quite active in arbitration.

Int: Among his, I presume, many charitable activities, he and your mother gave Wonder Hill to the Girls Club.

MF: Wonder Hill, down near Redwood City, at Emerald Lake, yes.

Int: How did that happen?

MF: Well, the Girls Club, which was quite an old institution in which my mother had been interested for a long time, wanted a summer or a country place to take the girls away. This was sort of the old settlement house idea, the Girls Club, in a way, working in the Mission District with the underprivileged girls and families, and this idea of a country place where they could get a little more rural, rustic setting. As I remember it, there was a lake there where they could do a little canoeing and, maybe, find fish, and barbecue.

Int: And your family just gave them --?

MF: My mother was interested and they'd bought this property and they gave the building. I guess that building is still there. I'll have to go and look at it some day. It was a very nice sort of a home, a dormitory type of thing, with a porch. It's a long time ago now. I can't remember the details, but they gave that.

My mother was always interested in the Girls Club and, then, sort of an outgrowth of that, the Community Music School, which is also out there in the Mission. The Girls Club was on Capp Street.* Also, my mother made a donation to build part of a building there for the Music School.

Just recently here -- oh, about a year or so ago -- the Music School** wanted some money to buy a piano and they wrote me a letter. My sister and daughter and son -- we have this little family foundation*** -- said, "Oh, we've got to give them a piano! That's the least we can do for our grandmother's favorite, or one of her favorite, charities." So they got their piano. [Laughter]

*See also pp. 35-36. Additional material on the Girls Club is contained in a series of interviews by Leah Selix in the donated tapes collection of The Bancroft Library.

**Community Music Center

***See also pp.

Int: Your father was one of the founders of Temple Emanu-el?

MF: No, no, no. Temple Emanu-el was founded in the '50s. It's one of the oldest institutions here. One of the founders or one of the incorporators on the record is a man by the name of Samuel "Flyschhacker," and Samuel Flyschhacker is a bit of a mystery. He also appears as listed on one of the vigilantes committees here. I think there were two vigilantes committees.

Int: Yes, '51 and '56.

MF: I think he was on the second one, because George Stewart from the University, who did a lot of research, told me about this. I don't know who Samuel Flyschhacker was, except my uncle used to tell me that he was a brother of Aaron. But he came and went. I don't know whether he got run out of town, or --

Int: Incidentally, who was Ewing Fleishhacker? He lived at 2110 California in 1905. Another relative, I guess.

MF: I don't know. I never heard of Ewing Fleishhacker.

Int: Maybe it was a mistake.

MF: 1905?

Int: 1905. This was in the city directory.

MF: It doesn't give any age? It could have been an infant.

Int: It doesn't give anything more.

MF: I know both my grandmothers had children that died at birth or in infancy. In fact, in the family vault there are a couple of small caskets.

Int: They didn't ordinarily list infants.

MF: He might have been a cousin or some other relationship to me, but I never heard about "Cousin Ewing."

Int: [Laughter] Your father was active, however, in Temple Emanu-el?

MF: Yes, he was. I don't know whether he ever served on the board. I served on the board and later was president. He was active. I know we used to always go to Temple. I remember the first place was Sutter Street. They had a temple here on Sutter Street, which went through -- well, it was pre-earthquake and then it was

MF: rebuilt where 450 Sutter Building is, the medical building there. That was the site of the Temple Emanu-el when I remember first going there.

Then, they had a Sunday school out on Sutter Street near Van Ness that I remember going to. I wasn't very good. My sister and I -- I think we went to Sunday school for one year or two. My father and mother were insistent that we go once in a while, but Sundays they used to like to take us to the country, so I never got a very good religious education, which sort of was an anachronism when I was asked to be president of the Temple. I said, "I can't be president of the Temple. I don't know anything about Judaism. I mean, I do know about it. I used to get Bible stories, but I don't think I'm a qualified person." They said, "Well, it's money matters and business that's more important." [Laughter]

So I learned a lot. While I was president, I used to go regularly, at least once a week and usually twice a week.* It sort of turned me off. I haven't been back very much since. I shouldn't say that. [Laughter] It's a fact!

But to tell about my father's side -- he was very active. He was one of the founders of the San Francisco Community Chest in the '20s. I think it was founded about 1923. He was one of the founders of that and always active in it.

Int: You were mentioning the other day that San Francisco still is, and had been, a place where a small group of people could get together and put a thing over.

MF: Yes.

Int: Would that apply to the Community Chest?

MF: Yes. The Community Chest concept, I think, started in Cleveland, and it was an idea of taking the existing organizations that raise money -- we had the Associated Charities here and we had the hospitals to some degree, and various things and each one was out raising their own money. They kind of said, "Well, let's get together," and later they used the slogan "one big give." They put them all together and had one big drive.

*See also pp. 116-122.

MF: My father was very active in that, I remember, when I was a young man -- well, '23, yes, that was about the time I was in college -- and then thereafter. He and two other men, Selah Chamberlain, who was an early Californian and also had a place down in Woodside, and a Mr. James B. Smith, who was sort of a peculiar character that had a checkered career. My father knew him. He was in the coal business in Utah and that's another thing I later got involved in. I forgot to mention that I was in the coal business in Utah. My father got in it with Jim Smith.

Jim Smith was a peculiar man. I'm never quite sure about that -- I know he'd been to jail for some time, for something, some kind of fraud or something, but he was reformed. It was interesting. He was sort of pillar of the community, but he had been in jail for something. And I remember this, when I was in the bank in '29 and even before that, he and my father and Selah Chamberlain used to go -- oh, about once a week, Mr. Chamberlain would come in and say, "Mortimer, we've got to go here," and maybe Smith was along. They would put on their hats and they would go up the street and they would call on the president of some corporation and get him to give some money. They did this all year around, working on money for the Community Chest.

Int: All three men would go?

MF: Well, either two or the three would go together, and they would set up the appointment and just use their own personal influence to get people to give, or to raise their gift, or to do more. They got the thing rolling in a way, because in those days the idea of corporations giving to charity was a pretty new concept. Individuals give, and there was the Lady Bountiful type of charity, but corporations didn't give their money. Now, of course, some of the biggest part of a united community fund comes from corporations.

This started then and, I remember, my father used to do it. He'd call on other bankers that he knew, and businessmen. They would zero in on them, set up the appointment and go and call on them and tell them they ought to be better than average citizens. This went on for quite a long time. He was very active in that and used to spend an awful lot of time raising money for it.

Int: He didn't get involved in how the money was apportioned?

MF: No. He was never so active in the distribution end, but he did more, I would say, than his fair share of the fund raising and he gave quite generously himself -- quite a variety of things. But he was

MF: involved in most of the cultural affairs. I mean, he was on the board of the symphony and the opera and the San Francisco Museum and many other things.

Int: Your mother was interested in the arts, was she?

MF: Well, she herself was an artist, quite a good painter.

Int: During her younger days?

MF: She did some of her better work after she got to be eighty years of age. We have a few of her paintings. Unfortunately, we lost some in a burglary. Some stupid guy stole a couple of them. But she had actually started painting, as young girls did, when she was a young girl. They used to paint plates and things like that, and do stitchery and things. She got seriously interested much, much later and used to go to class every couple of weeks.

Int: Who did she study with? Do you remember?

MF: She had several different teachers. Among others, Schaeffer Simmons -- do you know that name? He used to live over at Berkeley. He had a class. My aunt Alice Levison also went there. There was always a little thing that went on between them. My mother was a much better painter than my aunt, and my aunt, being older, didn't like that, that her younger sister did much better work. She used to always get complimented. Aunt Alice was pretty good, but it was sort of a copy type of thing. My mother had some rather original -- some of her paintings are rather good. She usually did faces, imaginary people, and self-portrait kind of things. She tried landscapes, but they were no good. She did a lot of very good oil paintings of women's faces. I've got three of them in my house in San Francisco. Each of the children have one. She died and we sort of distributed them around. She had given a few away.

She had sort of a one-man show out at the Legion* once. It wasn't Grandma Moses type of thing. It was rather good, strong, original type of painting.

Int: Was she interested in the art museum here?

MF: Some. My mother wasn't active in things. I mean, she was a rather quiet woman, rather retiring, and she didn't like to serve on committees. The Girls Club, in her early days, and the Community Music School, but she didn't get involved in many civic things.

*California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco

Int: Was she a friend of the Wolfsohns, to go back to the Girls Club?*

MF: Yes, the two Wolfsohn girls. Rae [Rachel] Wolfsohn and -- I can't remember the other one.** They got her interested. My father was quite an active person in the, shall I say, philanthropic world.

Int: Again, would he go out and call on people and raise money for such things as this?

MF: He was a good money raiser. That's the hardest job in the world.

Int: Yes, as you, I believe, know.

*See also p. 31

**Eva Wolfsohn

(Interview #2 - June 27, 1973)

CAREER BEGINNINGS: SAN FRANCISCO AND NEW YORK

Int: We were going to go back in this interview to 1927, when you graduated from college. Was that the year you married?

MF: No. I got married in '29.

Int: I see. That was after you returned to San Francisco?

MF: Yes.

Int: You graduated from college in June, 1927, was it?

MF: May, I think it was.

Int: And did your father run true to form and make you go right to work without a vacation?

MF: I think I went to work a couple of days after that, yes. I went to work here in San Francisco. He had an office over here on Main Street, a building, 9 Main Street, which is still over there. He owned several pieces of real estate and he owned that among other things. In that office he had private investments and real estate and other things.

There also happened to be, in that same building, the office of the Great Western Electro-Chemical Company. It was a very small building. It was only about a four-story building. So, he had these various private investments and he had a small clerical staff there to handle these private things. He put me to work there to familiarize myself with a variety of different things that he was interested in and I worked there and got familiar with his various

MF: things that he had interests in. One was an office building he and my uncle owned together. In some cases they had joint interests. They had a sort of a partnership, M. & H. Fleishhacker -- Mortimer and Herbert.

Int: A formally organized partnership?

MF: Well, I think it was a legalized partnership, yes. And then he also had some things that he owned separately. Most of his things were handled in that office. Among other things, they had an interest in an office building in Portland and another office building in Tacoma. They had some interest in a lumber business in Oregon and some farming property up near Marysville, a rather large farm. It was then a peach orchard.

Int: How did he happen to have an interest in farming property?

MF: Oh, he acquired this. I know sometimes my uncle would buy something and sometimes he would buy something when it seemed like a good investment. I don't know. That goes 'way back. They were investors and entrepreneurs and went into a lot of things, some of which were good and some of which weren't too good. But I got familiar with those things and I learned something about accounting and bookkeeping on a practical basis. I had studied a little of it in college.

Then, in the course of that year, I visited some of these properties and got familiar with them. I went up to the Northwest, to Portland and Tacoma, and to the farm and the lumber plant. And there were quite a few properties. He had some properties in San Francisco. He had some flats, and he had an interest in a couple of hotels here in San Francisco, which were, I'd say you'd call them, second class hotels. He always dabbled in real estate, or made investments in real estate, and in some cases did pretty well.

Some of these things later didn't do so well. In fact he had lots of problems with some, four or five years later, during the Depression. In the Depression, anything you owned was a problem. Real estate people didn't pay their rents. So I got involved in some of that, but that was quite a bit later. But in these early days, I just got familiar with them and learned a little about various practical aspects of business.

Then in November, 1927, at my father's request, I went to New York. I had some letters of introduction from my father and my uncle to get a job there in the banking business, and I had several

MF: different prospects. The one that looked most attractive was a letter of introduction to Mr. [Thomas S.] Lamont, who was the senior partner of J.P. Morgan & Company. So I went to see him.

I remember I arrived in New York, I think it was a Saturday morning. I had a friend of mine that I had lived with in college, Frederick L. Ehrman, who was already working there and I'd written him and arranged that we would live together. He had a room where we could live together, an apartment at 33 W. 55th Street. But, I remember, I got to New York and I went down to Wall Street and went to see Mr. Lamont. He saw me, and in those days J. P. Morgan was quite an imposing organization.

Anyway, after some conversation, he said he'd give me a job. They had a sort of a training program, and he called the personnel office. He said to me, "When will you want to go to work?" I said, "Well, I can go to work right now." He said, "Well, don't you want to get settled?" I said, "No, I'm all settled. I left my suitcase in a locker in Grand Central Station, and I'll get in touch with my friend this afternoon."

So then I went to work. They worked a half a day Saturdays there. I spent about a year there, in various departments. In fact, before I got through, I went through practically all the departments -- the vault and the investment analysis department, and then the foreign exchange department and the letter of credit department and the credit apartment. It was very, very interesting and it was during the end of '27 and most of '28, in which the stock market was very active.

One of the jobs I remember particularly. I was, for a while, working in the loan department. They made loans to stockbrokers and the stock market was gyrating very fast and we had to stay every night to finish the books. We had to balance. We had to check the value of these loans, based on what the stock market had done, and then if there was a deficiency, why, you had to put out call. But you had to always stay till that was finished. You couldn't start until three o'clock in the afternoon on that particular evaluation process, because you had to wait until the New York Stock Exchange was closed. Then, you'd get the prices from the Exchange and, then, go through each and every one of these loans to value the collateral to see whether it had sufficient margin. If it didn't, why, you had to send out a notice.

So, depending on how active the market had been, it sometimes took a long time. But you had to go through all the loans. There was another young fellow that I got to know fairly well who was

MF: also a trainee, and we were the only two trainees there, so we had to always work late, because the other fellows would go home. They were married men and they had to get home to their families by six, seven o'clock. Sometimes we'd work there till eight or nine o'clock, or whatever it took to finish the job. I don't think they do that any more. But in those days, you finished the day's work in a bank before you went home. Now it's all done by some computers located somewhere else.

But it was quite interesting. We got to learn a lot about the ups and downs of the stock and bond market.

Int: When a company like that took on a trainee, did they hope you would continue with the company?

MF: Not necessarily, no. They did this for certain selected -- we'll say friends, other banking correspondents who had young people who wanted to learn the business. This was a fairly new program that they had at that time. Prior to that time -- maybe a year or two before -- they'd had a very unusual policy at J.P. Morgan, which was a policy of, I guess, the original J. Pierpont Morgan: they didn't hire anybody in that firm who was a college graduate. They didn't like college graduates. They got them out of high school, because they felt that, by that means, they would learn the ways of their business and not be confused by too much theory.

That was as far as employees were concerned. This had changed by the time I got there, but the old style was sort of the apprenticeship system. I think it was carried over from the British concept, because J.P. Morgan did have a British background. I mean, they had learned their business in Britain. Employees were usually hired at the high school level except for the partners of the firm, who were usually brought in from the outside and who were not trained from the inside, except a few of them who were members of the family.

The concept was that that loyalty -- I mean, you only worked for one company all your life, so that was the only thing you were interested in and you knew the way they did business. Then you had a certain degree of loyalty. It was something, maybe, like what the Japanese do. If you once go to work for a Japanese firm, you never get fired. You stay there as long as you live. If they have too many people, why they keep them anyway. The business goes up and down. But, once you're hired you stay -- and that was pretty much true.

MF: Then, in fact, it was true in the banking business. It wasn't a very lucrative business but, once you were hired, you hardly ever got fired unless there was some very serious difficulty. Partners they would bring in from outside, from banks, or from leading corporations, who were bright young men, and they would select them as a partner.

But, by the time I got there to J.P. Morgan & Company, that policy had been changed and they had quite a few college graduates, although most of the clerical force were the old type, who had started in there as high school graduates. It was rather interesting. I guess you might say it was sort of a carryover from the 19th century apprentice system. You learned the business by working with an older man. But this training program was a more formalized thing. They gave you a chance to wander through the various departments. You'd spend two months or three months in each.

But I must say it was very rigorous training and very good training, and I certainly learned a lot from working with people who had a great deal of experience in international banking, investment banking, and all the phases of, I'll say, the money business.

Int: Did you have any other experiences in New York that were significant then?

MF: Well, I'd stayed there for about a year and then I went to work at the bank, of which my father was the president. The Anglo-California Trust Company had established a New York office to deal in securities. In those days, banks could deal in all kinds of securities, just like brokerage or investment firms, and they started this firm.

There was a man in charge there who'd come on from San Francisco.

Int: Who was he?

MF: A man by the name of Alfred DeRopp. He's no longer living. I don't believe he is. I was taken on as his assistant, having learned a little about the business. So, I stayed with that from towards the end of '28 until the spring of '29, when I came back to San Francisco and got married.

In the meanwhile, I'd gotten engaged and my wife had left San Francisco. It's a long, complicated story. She and her mother were going back to Europe. She'd been in Europe. She'd been

MF: educated in Europe and then came back here for a year or two.

We'd first met here in 1927, when I was still in college. My parents were not very happy about the idea that we were talking about getting married and we both were much too young. That was one of the reasons that my father and mother wanted me to go to New York, to get away from this young, attractive girl. But I was very young. Let's see -- about twenty years old.

Her mother thought she ought to go back to Europe and spend another year there, so they went through New York. While she was in New York and I was there, I persuaded her not to go to Europe. So we were sort of secretly engaged. We had decided. We hadn't gotten permission from our parents.

I came back to San Francisco twice when I was there in New York. While I was back here, I went to see her father and I had some further conversations with my parents, and it was arranged that if we'd wait another six months or a year, why, it would be okay. So, finally, the problem resolved itself in May of 1929. I came back I think in February, and she came back soon after, and we were married in May.

Int: Her family were San Franciscans?

MF: They were San Franciscans, yes. Her grandfather* was a San Franciscan. It goes back several generations.*

The life in New York in those days was a very pleasant one. It was during Prohibition. There were a lot of speakeasies, which was sort of the way people got their entertainment, and, also, in those years, there were marvelous theatre seasons. You see, theatre was just going great guns -- the Theatre Guild and musicals. They had Florenz Ziegfield, and a new show opened every week. I used to go to the theatre at least once or twice a week -- good shows and bad shows. I'd go and get a ticket. There was standing room. I got quite an interest in theatre and there were many good shows.

I mean, it was the period in which Eugene O'Neill's shows were coming on and, as I said, Florenz Ziegfield on the musical side, and Jack White, and there were many nightclubs. It was a very gay and interesting city and, really, sort of a small town

*I.N. Choyanski. See pp. 292-304.

MF: compared to what it is today. It was big, but, in my opinion, it was the period of New York's best and greatest development. That is, Wall Street was a very active place. There were new buildings going up and pretty good buildings. Some time later, the Rockefeller Center was built. About that time they were thinking of building up there on 5th Avenue. I can look back at that period of over forty years ago, forty-five years ago, and it's when I really felt I knew New York. Since, I've been back many, many times and every time I go back I like it less. It's not at all like it was. Greenwich Village was a very interesting place in those days.

Part of it, I think -- it's sort of strange, but the speakeasies were all illegal, but nobody paid any attention to that. You used to go around with a package of little cards. You went in, you'd get introduced, and then you got a card. The next time you come back, you'd show your card. They'd close and reopen and move around a lot.

It was not an expensive city -- not unusually expensive, although everything was at such a low level. I remember I got a hundred dollars a month salary. I remember when Mr. Lamont engaged me, he said, 'Well, we pay a hundred dollars a month. My son's working here and that's what he gets. That'll take care of your transportation and food, maybe, but it won't pay for much more.' Well, it wasn't supposed to. But I think that on something like three hundred dollars a month you could get by pretty well and not be too badly off.

FLYING FROM CHICAGO TO SAN FRANCISCO

Int: How did you happen to return to San Francisco then?

MF: Well, I came back in November, 1928, because my brother-in-law was quite ill. A previous trip in September, 1928, was a rather interesting thing because I decided that I would fly out. There was no regular airplane service. You couldn't fly from New York to San Francisco, but you could fly from Chicago to San Francisco. I went by train from New York. I found out that a mail plane service had been running for some years and it was a biplane, a single-engine plane. It carried two passengers, and it was supposed to take twenty hours from Chicago to San Francisco. It was about two thousand miles, and the plane averaged about one

MF: hundred miles an hour, including stops, because they stopped about every two or three hours.

Looking back on it, it was an interesting experience, but at the time it was a very unpleasant experience, because nothing went right. We were late in leaving. We left at night from Chicago, because they had a lighted way you could follow. They had lights all along the line. You flew along the railroad tracks. You couldn't fly very high, because they didn't have radar or navigational instruments. They flew by compass and they flew, really, on where they could see the lights as they flew along.

So we ran into some bad weather at the first stop and we had to wait for the weather to get better, and we took off and turned around because the weather was too bad. Anyway, to make a long story short, there were several passengers who got on and off. I was the only one there that went all the way, eventually, from Chicago to San Francisco, but it didn't make it in the twenty hours because of various delays, and we ran out of oil and made a forced landing in a field in Nevada. We finally didn't get to Reno till late at night, and you couldn't fly over the Sierra Nevadas at night because there were no beacons yet. So we had to stay overnight in Reno.

I left Chicago in the evening and got to San Francisco the day after the next, about nine A.M. I got here a little ahead of the train, but not very much. But anyway, it was a sort of an adventure. Well, it wasn't the first time. I had once been in an airplane around San Mateo. In those days, you could take a plane and fly around for half an hour or so. It was the second time I'd been in an airplane.

I didn't get anything to eat the whole time because they didn't serve any food or anything like that. We'd stop once in a while to take on gas and pick up mail and discharge mail and, if you were lucky, there was maybe a coffee pot in the hangar, or they'd run over and get a coffee pot. They didn't have these vending machines. I didn't get anything to eat and I felt pretty sick. Also it was very bumpy, because you flew low and the thing bumped around the whole time.

So I've done lots of flying since then, but never anything quite that bad. I've had more serious difficulties with forced landings, but that was a pretty good baptism of the airplane! [Laughter] But anyway, that was something that nobody else I knew had done.

MF: Of course, at that time passenger flying in Europe was much more advanced than it was in the United States. There were short flights. But in about two or three years they began to have passenger flights in the United States. But at that time long-distance flights were very unusual, although the air mail had been flying -- oh, I don't know -- maybe five or ten years before that. But they didn't want to bother with passengers.

These were sort of World War I updated airplanes with single engines.

Int: When you came back to San Francisco permanently, I presume you came sedately on a train?

MF: Yes. That's the only time I flew.

MARRIAGE AND HONEYMOON

MF: Then I was married in 1929, on the first of May.

Int: Did you come back specifically to be married, or did your father say it was time to come back to San Francisco then?

MF: Well, a combination. I was going to get married. I'd finished and done enough in New York and wanted to settle down. I'd had about a little less than a year and a half.

Int: Was it planned that you would come back to San Francisco?

MF: Well, when I left here originally, there really weren't any plans how long I'd stay, but at least it was about a year or so.

An interesting experience about this business about getting married -- my father and mother were not very happy about it and my uncle, who was close to my father, had interested himself in trying to persuade me not to do it. I remember one incident -- you talk about incidents -- that was really quite amusing. He was in New York. This was -- I've forgotten when -- maybe some time in '28, and he used to come to New York often. He asked me to come and have breakfast with him at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Part of the purpose of the visit was to talk me out of this idea of getting married. The manager of the hotel, a German by the

MF: name of Albert Keller, who was a good friend of my uncle and my family, came in while we were talking. I remember my uncle turned to him and said, "Albert, this young man is very stubborn and won't do what his parents want him to do. Did you ever have that experience? Were you ever stubborn and didn't do what your parents wanted you to do?" He talked with a slight accent, Mr. Keller, and was an awfully nice man. He said, "Yes. I only had one problem like that that I remember, where my parents wanted me to do something and I wouldn't do it. They wanted me to get married and I didn't want to get married," [laughter] which was, of course, just the opposite. [Laughter] My uncle didn't quite make the point he was trying to make with me. I suppose, in his day, in Switzerland or Germany, why, when a marriage was arranged, it had to be done and the parties were not consulted.

But then, after we were married -- a few days after -- we left on our honeymoon and went to Europe. That was from the first week in May till some time early in September, and we had a marvelous trip that neither of us will ever forget, because we were given a nice gift to pay for the expenses. We went by train to New York and spent a day or so there and went to London by ship, on the Majestic. It was a beautiful ship in its day. We spent some time in London, England, and drove around a little there. We had some cousins there that we spent some time with.

Then we went over to France and we motored around France. You didn't drive yourself much in those days. We had a driver who met us in Normandy and drove from there to Paris, and then we spent about three or four weeks in Paris. We had a very good time and did all the sightseeing -- not so much sightseeing, but entertainment, theatre, nightclubs. We then hired a car and drove from there by fairly easy stages on through France to Venice and went to the Lido. This was, then, the middle of the summer season. I guess it must have been along the end of July. We spent some time there and then flew from the Lido -- that's why I say the airplane service was pretty good -- to Vienna.

I remember one incident there, which I tease my wife about. It was quite hot at the Lido then; you spent most of your day on the beach. They had these cabanas.

In those days, you traveled with trunks. We had one or two trunks -- two, I think. Each of us had a trunk. We were gone for, you know, several months. And I had to take these trunks from the hotel at the Lido over to the railroad station in Venice in a motor-boat to check them to go by train. Actually, I checked them on to

MF: Berlin, because we just took some suitcases for the intervening few days in Vienna.

It was very hot, and I left and said to my wife, "Well, now, I'll be back in probably a couple of hours, or two and a half hours, and we'll just about have time then," -- it was a very close schedule -- "to get a bite of lunch and pay the hotel bill and get out and get to the airport to fly to Vienna." Well, it took me longer than I thought, because it was quite complicated. You had to have the trunks opened. They inspected them for outgoing customs, for some unknown reason. It was a long trip from the Lido way down town to the railroad station in Venice.

I got back and then didn't have much time, just would have had time. As I walked into the room -- I'd told her, "Get everything arranged. Get the hotel bill ready and so forth" -- she was sitting in the bathtub. So I said, "Where are you? Are you packed? Are you ready to go? Where's the bill?" "Well," she said, "It was so hot, I just couldn't do anything." I said, "Well, get out of the bathtub and let's get going," and we ran and grabbed our things and paid the bill. Hotel bills were not ready; you used to have to ask for them the day before. Everything was made out in longhand and you couldn't just dash in and pay your bill at the cashier's, as you do in this country and as you do everywhere now.

Then we got to the airplane late. They held it for us a few minutes. We didn't get any lunch and I hadn't had anything to eat since -- I don't know -- seven o'clock in the morning. So I guess that might have been the first argument that we had on our honeymoon, but we talk about it very often. [Laughter] I leave, or something of this kind -- we've traveled so much since then -- and I say, "Be sure when I get back you're not sitting in the bathtub." [Laughter]

So we arrived in Vienna and we were hungry, because they didn't serve meals on planes in those days. It was only about an hour's flight, I think. We flew over the Dolomites, I guess, into Vienna, and Vienna was sort of sad. It was not as gay as it got later. It was still really suffering (although it would seem hard to believe that, in 1929) from World War I, because, of course, it took a long time, having been the capitol city of the Austro-Hungarian empire and there was nothing left but little Austria. They didn't have a very strong economy. But it was a very interesting city.

Int: A great place to be hungry, I should think.

MF: Yes. I remember going out -- it was maybe two o'clock in the afternoon, or three o'clock -- we found an open-air cafe, and I remember the food, particularly the cream that went with the coffee, and some ham sandwiches. I've been back to Vienna and the place is still there, but it doesn't look so good any more.

Then we were going to fly from there to Berlin, where we were going to spend about twenty-four hours, and then go to Copenhagen. So we had another rather unusual experience on that flight. We left fairly early, I think about seven o'clock, and we got out to the airport and got in an airplane. We took off, flew around. There was something the matter with the plane, and we landed again and transferred to another plane. So we were a little late.

We got in the second plane and flew along for a while and, all of a sudden, we seemed to be going around in circles or something. Apparently everything was not working right. Anyway, what had happened, they had gotten lost. They were in a fog and they couldn't see where they were. I think they had some kind of an attendant, but it wasn't like stewardesses, who took care of everybody. If you wanted something, you asked for it. We could see into the cockpit, where the pilots were, and they were obviously arguing back and forth. They had a map and one fellow would point and the other fellow would shake his head and point some place else on the map. But they obviously didn't know what they were doing.

So, we were flying around and around in circles and they'd go down when they'd see a little hole in the fog and zoom up again around a church steeple. It was quite nerve wracking, and the people on the plane were getting terribly, terribly upset. One or two women were almost getting sort of hysterical. Finally, there was an opening in the clouds and they did land on a field, on a sort of a sloping field -- bumped a little bit and nobody was hurt or anything. We were in the middle of Czechoslovakia, some place near Prague as near as we could find out, because some people came up, and there was quite a serious language problem. My wife and I really didn't speak any German. The pilots there were German or Austrian. The people there were Czechoslovakian, and we spoke neither German nor Czechoslovakian.

Fortunately, through a long train of circumstances, we could find out what was going on and where we were, because there was a man on the plane who was a Yugoslav who also spoke Czechoslovakian and also spoke Italian, because Yugoslavs speak Italian. My wife

MF: speaks Italian fluently, so she would get the information from him and then she would translate it to me, so I had fairly long to find out what was going on.

Anyway, to hurry it up a little, we were able to get these farming people that had come to see this big bird drop out of the sky to help find automobiles. They were all amazed at this thing. I remember one of the things that struck us: they were mostly carrying their shoes. It was sort of a muddy field and I guess they didn't want to get their shoes worn out. It may have been a Sunday or a holiday or something, because there were quite a few of them, and they were all carrying their shoes, which struck me as rather -- [Laughter] so as not to wear them out.

So they were able to hire a few automobiles. The pilots said, "Well, if you get out and take your luggage and go to Prague," which was, I think we found, about a hundred kilometers away; "we will be able to take this plane off, get it up in the air, and we'll go to Prague and wait for you and fly you on to Berlin." Well, we finally got to Prague, to the airport, and it took hours because one of the cars broke down. We were going in sort of a caravan of small cars. There were I guess not more than fifteen or sixteen people.

Again we hadn't had anything to eat since early in the morning and we were feeling terrible, being up in two airplanes and a forced landing. When we got to the airport at Prague, we saw the airplane flying off and we rushed in there and said, "Tell them to come back," and they radioed back, "No. We're sorry. We've got to make a schedule." So they left us there. Boom! All these people, and nobody did anything.

I only say it because we have a contrast now. If anything goes wrong with an airplane, they find a hotel room for you and they put you up. But you were on your own in those days. So we finally got into the city of Prague, and we went to the railroad station to get accommodations on a train that was going to come through at midnight. Mind you, we'd left Vienna at seven o'clock in the morning and the train that we were going to get that would take us to Berlin hadn't even left much later than we did. So, again, the airplane wasn't so -- .

So we were able to get tickets, but we weren't able to get any sleeper accommodations, because we were sort of pushed around by the other people, who all spoke the language better, and by the time we got to the window there were no berths left. But

MF: anyway, we had quite a few hours till midnight. We didn't know what to do and we decided, well, we'd try and see something of this beautiful city of Prague. That's the only time I'd been there.

We saw in the distance a hotel and I thought, "Well, if there's a hotel, there's a concierge." Language was really quite a problem, because Czechoslovakian was completely different than any other language and we couldn't find anybody that spoke English, French, or Italian. Neither my wife nor I spoke very good German. They did speak German there, but they didn't like to speak German. German had been the language of the country before it was independent.

We found a hotel. We found a concierge. So, we told this fellow, "Well, hire us a taxi and tell him to drive us around and get us back to the railroad station at ten or eleven o'clock." So we did drive for two or three hours anyway. I've forgotten just how long. We saw a little of the city. The only complicated thing was we couldn't understand. The driver spoke nothing but Czechoslovakian, pointing out all the points of interest, but we didn't quite understand what he was saying. But we got an impression of it.

Then we got on the train. Oh, it was very difficult. Later on, hours later, I got a berth with another man and my wife got one with another woman. There were some empty ones. By the time we got to Berlin the next morning, we just didn't feel very well. Again we missed a half a day and we wanted to see something of Berlin. We made a quick, rushed trip and saw some of the sights and then went on that night to Copenhagen, by train.

Then we had another flight from Copenhagen to Oslo, which also resulted in a -- not a real mishap. It was a seaplane. They ran out of water and had to land in the sea to refill the water, but that wasn't too bad. It was just a little bumpy landing on some waves. Well, we didn't do any more flying for a while, although we did later on. We went, then, after a few days from Oslo to Stockholm, where we had some friends. Then we took an airplane trip from there over to Finland for a day and came back again.

Then we went back to Stockholm, motored through Sweden, and then came back from Götterberg, Sweden by ship to New York, and then back to San Francisco.

Int: Did you have to make any business calls while you were on the trip?

MF: No. No business, just pleasure.

When I got back, that was September, and soon thereafter my mother and father decided they'd take a trip to Europe. We lived in their house in San Francisco until we were able to find a home of our own.

THE '29 CRASH AND '33 BANK MORATORIUM

MF: They were gone for some time, during which time the famous stock market crash of '29 took place.

Int: What were you doing then?

MF: I was then back in the bank in San Francisco. I had worked for their New York office and I worked now here in the investment banking department. But I do remember, when this terrible stock market crash came, sending a cable to my father, who was somewhere in Europe, asking him what I should do, or what he wanted me to do about his securities. And he said, "Do whatever you think is best." He was very relaxed about the whole thing. [Laughter] There wasn't anything he could do anyway, and he wasn't going to come home and he wasn't going to do anything about it, because he had investments in the market. His view was, "It'll work out."

Int: What was San Francisco like that day? Do you remember the day that the news of the crash came?

MF: Well, I remember standing in the brokerage office and watching the ticker. People were shaking their heads and it was really quite a blow. I don't think, you know, the first day or so, people were quite aware of what had happened. It took some time before they started to realize. Of course, the stock market went up again and down; the major Depression came two or three years later. That in 1929 was more or less the beginning of it.

Int: When did things appear to be grave enough for you to cable your father?

MF: Oh, I think that same day, whenever the day was.* The market

*October 29.

MF: fluctuated back and forth and might have bounced back a little bit, but the major Depression that we felt was in the '30s, in '32 and '33. Of course, I do remember all of that period -- people selling apples on the street and farmers being thrown out of their farms.

Being in the banking business, we had a great deal of problems and that ran on for many years, until the closing of the banks. It started in Detroit and then spread around the country. The banks were closed, really, just to try and restore confidence. Then the federal government came in and formed what was known as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the RFC, which was headed by Jesse Jones. They put government money into the banks, for preferred stock and to rehabilitate them.

The idea was to close all the banks at one time and then reopen them slowly because, if an individual bank was a little weak and it had to close -- this had happened in other parts of the country before it spread out to California -- then there'd be a run on all the good banks. People would say, "Well, you know, Bank A is in trouble, so maybe Bank B ... I'd better get my money out of them before they close the window." So the only proper way to do it was to close them all by government order -- by the governor of the state of California -- and stop the rush on the banks and then reopen them, with the government saying, "This bank is sound, and we've investigated, and people can put their money back."

But I remember the period of the bank closure, which was quite a shock to people, naturally, but it seemed to work.

Int: How long were they closed? I can't remember.

MF: Oh, I don't know. Not very long; not very long.

Int: March, 1933, wasn't it?

MF: Yes, it was March, '33. It varied in different parts of the country. It was state by state, because I remember very specifically that the order closing the banks was issued by the governor of California and I remember the afternoon in which that happened. I was in my uncle's office. He was a close friend of the governor. It was Governor Rolph, formerly mayor of San Francisco. He had gotten a phone call from the governor that he was going to issue this order at midnight or something like that. That was confidential and you weren't supposed to go around spreading it till the announcement was made.

MF: I remember we went to a party that night at the St. Francis Yacht Club and I told my wife, "Before morning, there's going to be an announcement about the banks being closed, but don't say anything about it." In the middle of this party, I guess there was a newspaper extra or something put out. "Oh," the people were saying, "How can this happen?"

You realize things are getting bad, but nobody knows they're really going to happen till they happen to you. We'd heard about problems in Detroit and we'd heard about problems in Chicago, but everybody thought, "Well, after all, nothing's going to ever happen in San Francisco quite this bad." It was a shock, and then people recovered from it.

Int: Did San Francisco's bank situation at that period differ markedly from that of other cities?

MF: I think it was somewhat better. Well, it varied so much. There were many, many banks then. This was before the day of big, multiple banks, the branch bank. The country banks, so called, had a lot of trouble, because their loans were mostly to farmers, and when the depositors were drawing out their money due to fear, they had to call their farm loans, and the farmer couldn't pay in the middle of his crop season, and they had no cash.

But the city banks had more liquidity. They had bonds and they had commercial loans that they could call. So, they weren't really in such bad shape. But the whole thing became an epidemic, sort of like a house of cards. It was domino theory. When you have one bank closed, then everybody is worried that the next one will close.

Int: The Bank of America would have been in both city and country, then, wouldn't it?

MF: It was then the Bank of Italy* and it wasn't that big. They had a lot of farm loans and they were, yes, in both city and country.

Int: Were there any other banks here that had country branches?

MF: Well, yes. But, you see, the city banks had the money of the country banks. The country banks who had their reserves would

*The name was changed to Bank of America in 1930.

MF: place them in city banks, so when the country banks had problems, they'd draw their money out of the city banks, which left the city banks with less liquidity. So, whether they were one way or another, everything was sort of interlocked.

Int: Was that the same elsewhere as here in California?

MF: I think pretty much all over the country. I just happen to recall the situation here. I remember a day or so afterwards, when the banks were still closed, people who wanted to go and buy in a shop, if they had cash, they paid for it, and shopkeepers that had cash would take it down and make some arrangement to put it in the safe deposit vault or something to keep the actual cash because there was no check system operating.

Of course, in those days (I say "those days;" it's quite a while ago) people used cash or currency or coin much more than they used checks. It was normal to have some cash on hand to go out and do your shopping with. So there was a fair amount of currency. I remember going to the barber shop, a barber that I'd been to for a long time. I had some money. I mean, I had a little money in my pocket, enough to get by with. When I got ready to pay, he said, "Well, don't pay me because you don't have any money." I said, "Well, I have some money." He said, "That's all right. Don't pay me anyway." I put a chit in the cash register. He wasn't collecting money from any of his old customers, and a lot of people did that. They started extending credit on sort of an informal basis, since everybody had confidence that it would work out.

Int: Were there robberies?

MF: I don't recall that. There was, of course, more cash around because people didn't get a chance to put it in the banks, but I don't think there were any robberies. In those days, you didn't have that degree of crime.

Harroun: In that period, were employees paid in cash?

MF: Yes. Payrolls were almost always in cash -- a little envelope with your money in it. Even in those days, five, ten, and twenty dollar gold pieces were fairly common. A lot of people had gold.

Int: Then did they not pay the bank employees? How did they work that?

MF: Oh, they paid in cash -- everybody. There was some cash around. I've forgotten. It didn't last that long, but they were able to

MF: make it. I've forgotten. There were some special arrangements made whereby payrolls and essential things were taken care of, but I've forgotten the details. It was sort of an unusual kind of society for a while till they reopened them.

Then there were many, many problems. I know all banks and financial institutions all during that period, had problems for three, four, or five years before we really -- the economy of the country didn't really start recovering in any healthy way until World War II.

Of course, the war in Europe started in '39, and then there was the so called phony war. Well, even in '39 it was sort of a phony war because nothing happened for a year. But that did help the economy of this country because the Europeans were buying everything they could get in the way of food and war material and steel. So our country did pick up some as the result of that demand for exports.

BANKING IN SAN FRANCISCO IN THE 1930's

Int: During that period, what did you do in the bank?

MF: I was in the investment banking business and then, later, in other divisions of the bank. The two banks that we mentioned earlier, the Anglo Trust and the Anglo London, Paris, combined in '33 as the Anglo-California National Bank -- I guess it was '33 -- partly because it made them stronger, the two together, and cut down on unnecessary expenses in merging their various assets. By then national banks were able to perform all the functions of state banks and could have trust departments.

There were quite a lot of bank mergers, mainly to make the banks stronger. It would cut down on the expenses and make it more efficient and so forth. So, before and after, say, from '29 through '33, up till the time of the merger, I had worked in the investment business department of the bank and then, later, in the other departments -- the trust department to some degree and the commercial loaning. I spent a lot of time for one period working in agricultural loans. You had quite a few agricultural loans even up here, and I got to know something about the farming business.

MF: I spent some time up in the Sacramento-Stockton delta. We had some very large loans there which were problem loans and it was necessary to go up there and try to work them out. So, I would say, in one way or another, I think I got a general familiarity with practically all phases of banking. Branch banking -- I worked for part of the time in one of the branches and got a pretty general experience in that.

Int: Did your bank have many branches?

MF: I think they had about six branches then and later on, going over a longer period, they acquired some branches out of the city. But these were in San Francisco -- four on Market Street, one in the Marina, one in the Mission district, one in the Portrero, and one in the Richmond district. I think that was about all. It was the beginning of the branch banking era.

The Anglo-California Trust Company had, for its day, a fair number of branches, like six in San Francisco. There were a lot of banks that didn't have any branches. Bank of America had a lot of branches, and there was the American Trust Company, which later became part of the Wells Fargo and which had a large branch system. Wells Fargo did not have; they had only two offices in San Francisco. The Bank of California didn't have any branches in San Francisco.

Int: Were all of those banks in the same general field, or did certain banks have certain specialties?

MF: Well, there were savings banks and commercial banks. Then there were some who were strictly commercial and some strictly savings and there were combinations of the two.

Int: I just meant, for instance, was one bank more interested in agriculture and another in real estate or business? Were there specialties?

MF: Well, the so called saving banks, which were the San Francisco Bank and Hibernia Bank, were pretty much strictly savings banks, and savings banks invested most of their assets in real estate loans and bonds. They wouldn't go into commercial banking. Then there were commercial banks that didn't go into real estate loans. Then there were some that were a combination of both.

That's as distinguished from today, when practically all banks are all the same. They're all in everything, with the exception of still a few in San Francisco. We still have the

MF: Hibernia Savings Bank, although they have a trust department and a commercial department. So they were specialized partly because of this old concept of the law whereby state chartered banks couldn't go into certain fields; they stayed out of the regular commercial banking and stayed with the real estate loans.

Int: Was there more active international banking in other cities?

MF: Well, yes. There wasn't very much international banking in the San Francisco banks in this period of the '30s. The Bank of America was not in it. The Anglo and London-Paris Bank had a small overseas department and did some foreign business, letter of credit business, and things like that. Wells Fargo did a little, but most foreign and international banking was done by New York banks. On the west coast, we had very little of that -- a little.

Int: There was no special relationship with the Orient?

MF: No. There wasn't a great deal of that. There was some small amount, but it was very small compared to today, when almost all American banks are quite active in the international field.

Int: Did San Francisco do banking for Alaska?

MF: I think most of that was done out of Seattle. Seattle was the normal trading port with Alaska. There were ships that went from San Francisco -- the salmon fishers and other things came back and forth pretty much.

It's very hard, you know, because there's so much, covering a long period of time when I was involved in many things.

THE ALASKA SALMON COMPANY

MF: Talking about Alaska, one of the interests that my family had, both my mother's family and my father's to some degree, was sort of an outgrowth of the Alaska Commercial Company business, which had been pretty well sold, but they still had an interest in a company called the Alaska Salmon Company. I was on the board of directors of that and I remember that was an interesting business. They used to go up to Bristol Bay in Alaska and they'd go up by ship. They owned a ship. Maybe they owned two, but I know they owned one. The ship would go out of San Francisco. They took the

MF: whole crew, which went up there and then went fishing.

They did the fishing and the canning all in the same plant. They had the plants on shore, but the ship and the material -- the cans and the labels and the fishing nets and so forth -- they'd all go out of San Francisco. It would take some time to get to Alaska. Then they would fish through the season and fill the ship with the pack and then bring it back here again and sell it.

Then later on, quite a bit later, that whole thing changed. They still had the canneries up there in Bristol Bay, but they used to fly the crew up, which was a much more economical way, and then charter a ship for the pack. But this ship was the sort of a ship where the crew would be assembled in San Francisco with all the gear, and then they'd spend the whole season up there, four or five months, and then they'd come back again. They'd do the fishing. That took a long time to get up there and back, and they had to be paid by the day. They found that later on, when airplanes became current, it paid to fly them up there.*

Int: Did you go up there?

MF: No. I've never been to Alaska.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GUATEMALA GOVERNMENT

Int: You went to Guatemala once, though, in 1935.

MF: I went to Guatemala (that was when I was in the bank) because the bank had had some dealings with the government of Guatemala. They'd acquired this actually. They hadn't directly -- they had a customer, Mr. Adolfo Stahl, who was a Guatemalan. He was on the board of directors of the Anglo Bank at one time.

The Stahl family in Guatemala were merchants and coffee brokers, and they had made some investments and persuaded the bank, I believe, also to make some. They'd loaned some money to the government of Guatemala for two purposes. One was to build a railroad. I think it was called the Los Altos Railroad. The other one was to finance

*For additional recollections of the Alaska salmon business, see pp. 270-272.

MF: a telephone system in the country of Guatemala.

During the '30s, the government of Guatemala defaulted on their payments, but that wasn't unusual because all South and Central America defaulted on all their payments. Whether they had the ability to pay or not they did it anyway because this was when everybody was not paying their bills. It was the way of doing.

As a matter of fact, I did find out more about it. The government of Guatemala had been persuaded to default on their payments by a New York private banking firm, Hallgarten and Company, who had sort of made a business out of going down to these countries and saying, "Well now, don't pay your bills. Just default, turn it all over to us, and we'll get you a settlement. We'll cut down the interest payments and settle for a fraction of the debt." They were making a business out of this.

I later found that out because I was sent down there -- partly because my wife had gone to school here with the daughter of the then foreign minister of Guatemala, who had formerly been the consul general in San Francisco and lived here for many, many years. So we had some contacts with the government, and we went down there to find out what this was all about and how it might be settled.

I mention this thing about Hallgarten because I found out that I couldn't get very far because the government down there said, "Well, we can't talk business with you. We have somebody else. You'll have to go through somebody else." The end of the story is, finally, the thing was resolved. But it was rather an interesting experience.

We went down there, and we had an agent there who was an Englishman, who sort of represented the bank and other business; he was a general agent or representative. His name was Jack Armstrong, and he took me around. First we had an attorney there to find out what the status of this loan was, what we could do to get these payments restored. So Armstrong said, "Well, we'll have to go and see the Minister of Finance."

It was a very small community. Everybody knew everything that was going on. I don't know if they had the telephones tapped, but, certainly, if you stood on the corner somebody would be there listening. In fact, you weren't allowed to stand on the

MF: corner. Two people couldn't stand for more than a few minutes because that was a potential revolution. They'd just had a revolution. So if you stood for any length of time the police would come along and tell you to get going, but if you'd talk everybody was overhearing you.

Anyway, I was in touch with this friend of mine, the father of the girl, and he ostensibly couldn't do anything for me because it wasn't his department. It was the Minister of Finance and he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but we would go to his house and he would give me a little background information about how I might proceed.

But anyway, the first thing I found when we went to visit the Minister of Finance was that the Minister of Finance was away. He couldn't see me. "Well, come back tomorrow; we'll see," and so forth. This was a stalling operation. We couldn't get started to talk to the people. So I sort of got the message directly and indirectly. This was the technique, that the Americans were always in a hurry and you'd come down and in a couple of days you'd want to get it settled and, if they could just not see me, then they wouldn't have to do anything.

So we got the message. We were staying at the hotel there, and we sort of concocted a plot. I told this fellow Armstrong, "Get me a real estate broker. We want to look at a home. Mrs. Fleishhacker and I are going to rent a home for a year and bring the children down because we like it very much." So, we went on looking for houses and, within a few days, the Minister of Finance came back from his vacation and was there and I got to see him. We continued looking at houses. One was too big and the other was too small and we kept this going for some weeks.

Then we took a vacation. We went to El Salvador and spent a few days. So I sort of turned the tables on them. We weren't really in any hurry. We had all the time in the world to spend. We did spend several weeks there and did a little sightseeing. We didn't quite settle though. We had a meeting with the president of the country, who was a dictator, Ubico -- General [Jorge] Ubico, who sort of looked like Napoleon. He combed his hair like Napoleon. Sort of down in the front, you know, and bangs.

It was interesting. We didn't get the whole thing settled, but we got it started and then, later on, one of our other men in the bank, who had some legal experience, went down, and finally they reinstated the thing with a reduction in the rate of interest.

Int: With a reduction?

MF: With a reduction. I think they were eight per cent loans and we reduced the rate of interest to six per cent and gave them another ten years to pay it off.

I made some inquiries about their ability to pay. I went to see the head of the central bank and, oh, the Americans and German firms. The country was really in very good shape, Guatemala. They were perfectly able to pay, but they didn't want to pay and I don't blame them. The whole thing had been a little bit -- well, the money that was put up to build the railroad never got it built. I think most of the money went into the hands of the politicians and the contractors. They never built the railroad. There was no sign of it, and there wouldn't have been any sense in building it anyway. It went from no place to no place. But lots of railroads got built that way, even in the United States.

But the telephone system was very good. It was a dial system. I believe it was a German system and we supposedly had a mortgage on the telephone system. So I went out to examine the telephone system and talk to the manager. They had told us, "Well, the thing's no good. The railroad's no good. The telephone system's no good. The money -- we don't really owe it to you because it was all a big swindle." It was not true of the telephone. The manager of the telephone was very proud. He said, "This is the best telephone system in the world and it works perfectly." We asked to see his profit and loss sheet and it was making good profit.

So I said to the lawyer that was working for us, "Why don't we just take over the telephone system and collect our money? It's making money. The law says we have the right. We have a mortgage on this thing and they're in default." He said, "Well, it says it all right, but they'll pass a law tomorrow and say you can't, so don't try it. You'd get shot anyway." It seemed like a good idea, but it didn't work in Guatemala.

Int: The New York company, Hallgarten, that was using that device -- was that a legal thing to do?

MF: Well, I suppose it was. It was a little bit shady, but I guess it was legal for them to go and tell them that they could get them a better settlement. They had made a contract with the government that they would get a fee based on how much of a reduction they could get on the debt, and the Guatemala government had to pay them off. It took a long time. Even though they settled

MF: for less, they had to pay them something. They could pay them as much as they wanted, I believe. I'm not sure of all the details, but it certainly was a roadblock. [Laughter]

Int: My word!

MF: Well, I learned a little about how to deal with foreign countries. We enjoyed it. It was very nice. We went back there a couple of times since, but I haven't been there for a long time. So, anyway, that takes us up into the '30s.

DEPRESSION PERIOD FINANCING

MF: Oh, another thing that was rather interesting during that same period of, let's say the Depression -- I got very much involved with the movie business because the bank had sold bonds and it was acting as the trustee of a large number of bond issues on the Paramount Company Theatres we had in San Francisco. I think they had three. They had the California Theatre, the Strand Theatre, and the Granada Theatre. The California and the Granada don't exist any more. The Strand Theatre may still be there -- I think it is. It's on the south side of Market Street. That was an early theatre. Then also there was a bond issue on their theatre in Los Angeles, the Paramount Theatre in Los Angeles, and the studio.

They all went into default and they had these bond owners protective committees to try and work out a reorganization, and we did. This was all part of the same parcel. There were lots of defaults. For example, practically every hotel in San Francisco had a bond issue on it that was in default -- the Palace Hotel, the Fairmont Hotel, the Clift Hotel, the Huntington, the Mark Hopkins Hotel, all of them.

And the reorganization. They couldn't make their interest payments. I wasn't involved in the hotels. I was involved in these theatre properties and in some of the other things because part of the work I was doing on these bond reorganizations also involved some irrigation districts, and I think I must have served on about fifteen or twenty bond reorganization committees.

One that was interesting was this Los Angeles movie company. Now, in that case, the security behind the bond issue was more than adequate because it included the whole studio. So I remember

MF: we went down to Los Angeles to look into that and then went and looked at the theatre and got some appraisals of values. My wife went along with me. We spent four, five, or six days and went out and looked at the studio.

The best chance I had to look at the studio, because they were very anxious to -- I mean, I had sort of an inside track. We determined that the values there were really 'way in excess of the mortgages. Theatres were not so good, but the studio -- they couldn't get along without it. So that one they paid up in full. There was no reorganization on that because they realized that they couldn't get along without the studio, although there was a lot of bluffing back and forth.

All the movie industry -- Fox, Paramount -- they all had difficulties financially. In fact, almost everybody had some kind of financial difficulties. So I would say that kind of training of finding out what can happen when things are bad was rather good as far as I was concerned and these were interesting. We worked out a lot of reorganizations of bond issues and they were all over northern California. That occupied a lot of the time, not only bond issues but reorganizations and refinancing of other loans.

What really was the problem in many cases was that these financial situations came about because they were faced with a lot of debts, and business was down, and their income was down and they couldn't meet the debt payment; but by extending the terms of repayment and reducing the interest rate for a certain length of time they worked it out. The same thing happened in railroads. They went through financial reorganizations. If the values were there and they were given enough time and easy terms, they worked out in many of these.

The alternative was to go through bankruptcy, which really was an expensive procedure, and there weren't really very many bankruptcies then. There were some, but many of these things were worked out by just a reasonable readjustment of the terms of repayment. One of the things that was learned out of the Depression was, on loans, to have reasonable repayment terms. Farm loans, in the old days, and home loans -- now we have twenty and thirty year mortgages; that wasn't the case in those days. They were five years and then they were refinanced. But these long-term mortgages -- I think the average mortgage on a home now is about thirty years. That wasn't the case then. They were much shorter and people couldn't pay it off during the Depression. If things went well they could pay it off, but if things were a little slack in the economy they couldn't pay it off.

Int: Did interest rates go up and down as fast as they do now?

MF: Oh yes. They jumped all over the lot. Even in '28 and '29 when the stock market was up, when people were buying. Of course, most of that stock market thing was based on credit -- people bought on margin, a very small margin. I mean, you'd put up twenty-five per cent and borrow seventy-five per cent. Well, when everything went down, pretty soon there wasn't any margin and there was a big demand for money to carry this inflated stock market, and I remember interest rates used to bounce around very high -- seven, eight, nine, or ten per cent sometimes for short periods of time.

Banks, on savings accounts, paid four and a half per cent, which is about what they pay now. A lot of real estate was financed on second mortgages. They used to be twelve per cent, one per cent a month, and even higher. Low interest rates really didn't come along and come in fashion until, say, during World War II when interest rates got abnormally low, around two and three per cent on loans.

Int: Was that because they were backed by governmental agencies?

MF: Well, that was sort of an artificial attempt to make money easy to bolster the economy and create an inflation because our problem there was a deflation. The whole period from, say, '29 through '33 or '34 was a tremendous deflation. Prices were going down -- quite the opposite of today. I mean, people were terribly worried because prices were going down. If you were a farmer and you had crops to sell, you'd get less every year than you did the year before, so you had to pay people less wages and that was a deflationary spiral.

So, in order to correct it, the government pumped money in a low rate of interest in a variety of methods and made money available. Money was the thing that people wanted and didn't have any of. They had a lot of other things. They had real estate, or they had farm crops, or they had goods and things, but they didn't have money. Now we have sort of the other way around. We've got too much of everything now.

Int: With all that lack of money and that difficulty about meeting payments, did a great deal of property change hands?

MF: Yes. There were just many, many foreclosures. I talked about some of these corporate reorganizations where there weren't, but there were many other cases where there were. Of course, farmers were wiped out, as they say. They lost their farms. The banks took them

MF: over. They didn't want them because they couldn't operate the farm. The lending institutions just had to find some other farmer. There was a tremendous amount of people who were wiped out. If they had any debts, the debt was in excess of what -- not in excess of what the value was, but they couldn't pay the debt. People just didn't have the cash available and there were a lot of people wiped out who lost their property.

Int: What did that do to the agricultural situation in the state then? Did that have any over-all effect upon it?

MF: Well, as far as production was concerned, I don't think it reduced the production. Somebody grew the crops some way or other, but not only in this state, but in Iowa and many other parts of the United States, the farmer really took an awful bad beating because most farmers, then and even today, always operate on borrowed capital. They had to borrow something at least to produce their crops and many of them, in addition to that, had a pretty big mortgage. As long as they just had to pay the interest and didn't have to pay the principal they were all right, but when they couldn't pay the interest, then the loan became in default and the principal came due. We've changed a lot of that now. I mean, farmers have long-term credit and they have other ways of financing through the cooperatives which came along, which provide money for them.

There were many problems. They couldn't get their crops to market. There's much more organization in the farm business. Well, it is a business now.

Int: Did you have any part in creating refinancing plans?

MF: No. I think I was a little too inexperienced for that in those days. I sort of learned as we went along.

Int: Yes. I forget how young you were in this period.

EARLY WORK WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

MF: There's an interesting thing. I was just looking here the other day after you left. I see that in 1933 I was president of the San Francisco Bond Club. The Bond Club still exists.

Int: Pretty young president.

MF: Yes, I was much too young. [Laughter] Then I was in the Junior Chamber of Commerce. That was quite a few years later. I was active in that for several years. That was in those days, I felt, quite a fine organization. I guess they're all right today, but they were a little different then. They were part of the San Francisco Chamber. Now they're more or less unrelated, the Chamber and the Junior Chamber. The Junior Chamber of Commerce has sort of become an international movement. They're called the JC's.*

I recall we had a convention. I'm jumping around a little bit because this was several years later -- middle, late '30s. We had a convention out here. Let's see. When was the Treasure Island Exposition?**

Int: '39 and '40.

MF: Well, I guess this was '38 or '39, and we had a national convention of all the Junior Chamber of Commerces. I think I was vice-president or something of the Junior Chamber, and we decided -- this was before the Exposition opened and they were just building it -- that we would have it over there, have a sort of a get-together, an evening.

They were from all over the country. It was an annual convention of the Junior Chambers. We thought we'd do something different. Instead of having a barbecue, we would have a cioppino, a fish cook. We got some of the Fisherman's Wharf people and they donated the stuff and they cooked all this stuff up in these big kettles on the fires over there. But what I remember most about it was that about half of these fellows, who came from Texas or Kansas, wouldn't eat this stuff. They took a trip, and all they wanted was steak. The idea of eating this cooked up fish and the clams and crab --! We thought it was just marvelous that we would have French bread and cioppino. We thought this would be really something that would make a high point in the history of Junior Chambers. But I remember these fellows would take this dish and they'd look at it and go throw it in the Bay. [Laughter] It wasn't a great success. Most of them had never seen a piece of fish, or at least it was something they never ate anyway. When you came from the interior part of the United States, you didn't eat fish unless you were crazy. [Laughter]

*For additional recollections of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, see pp. 123-124.

**The Golden Gate International Exposition.

Int: You, then, started being active in community affairs fairly early.

MF: Yes, yes. I did get active. I was active in the Community Chest in the middle '30s. I don't know exactly what the dates were, but I know in 1941 I had been active for some years because I was then the chairman of the budget committee of the Community Chest. I had to resign that job when I went in the Navy. I was a member of budget panels and the budget committee, and I got to be chairman of the budget committee.

I was active in a variety of things, but not really very active until after the war.

LUMBER, COAL AND TAXICABS

Int: You were working full days?

MF: Yes. I had a full five-and-a-half day work week. And then, I was also involved, in addition to the bank, in getting more active in some of my father's affairs and some things I mentioned earlier. During the Depression we had a lot of problems with the office building, and two office buildings up in the northwest had financial problems and we had to sell them. Then this lumber company got into difficulties and it had to be liquidated or sold off.

Int: What was the name of the lumber company?

MF: It was the Western Lumber Company at a place called West Fir in Oregon. I think it was somewhere near Eugene. I remember I went up there a couple of times. Then my father had some interests with this Mr. Smith that I mentioned earlier, James Smith, in the coal business in Utah, in two companies called the Spring Canyon Coal Company and the Royal Coal Company. Actually, that continued later on, much later, up till maybe about ten years ago when I finally sold them. I was president of both companies for a while and used to go over to Utah.

It was very difficult to make any money in the coal business. It used to be. It was a declining thing. They used to ship the coal from Utah to San Francisco. They had a big California market and this was used for household heating and blacksmith shops and all kinds of things. But coal, little by little, became a very unused product, particularly in California, so their market was

MF: pretty much restricted to Utah, Colorado, and around there. There people continued to use coal for domestic heating and even in office buildings, hotels and factories for fuel. Then, little by little, natural gas moved into this area and fuel oil, and the coal business was a continually declining thing, and the only major users of coal were the utility companies.

And then it was an industry in which you continually had to get more and more sophisticated machinery in order to keep the labor costs down. This is pretty much the history of the coal industry all over the United States. But there is still a large supply of coal in Utah and some of it is a rather good quality of coal. But it's not located in an area that has a very big natural market. A lot of the coal is used still in the iron industry.

But we were not able to compete. I don't know how many mines there are running in Utah, but at one time in Utah -- around Provo was most of this -- there were probably about fifteen coal mines operating then. I believe now there are probably very few of them, but there's still a lot of coal there, and we talk about the energy crisis today -- if we could find ways and means of using this coal, there's still a lot of it there, although it gets more and more expensive to mine as you go down.

That was an interesting experience, but it was a difficult kind of a business to be in. There were a lot of physical hazards. Every once in a while there'd be an explosion or a fire, which was very distressing and more than distressing to the people that got injured. We didn't have too many, but we every once in a while had an accident of some kind.

Int: You sold it a few years ago?

MF: Well, actually, we sold it out. I guess about ten years ago, although other people had bought some of the interest in the thing. But I had continued on the board of the company.

Int: You were also on the board of the Yellow Checker Cab company.

MF: Yes. Oh, I was on that board for about twenty years and that was a rather interesting experience, another business that had many peculiar angles to it. I had some stock in it. I bought some stock. My father had some stock too, and others in San Francisco. We finally sold that company out, also quite a long time ago, to a San Diego concern, Westgate Corporation, who happen to be much in the public press today.

MF: This was a taxicab company that operated in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles and, later, South San Francisco. Yellow Cab was a name which was really originally started in Chicago, but there were no connections. There were Yellow Cab companies all over the country, but they were not in any way connected. It wasn't a franchise thing. You could take that name and use it any way you wanted. This was the Yellow Cab Company of California.

That was quite an interesting experience -- lots of dealings with labor unions. I remember we had a long strike, which I was involved in trying to settle. That was the first time that I met Jack Shelley, who later became mayor of San Francisco. He was a labor leader and he was in the group to settle the strike. We settled it, but it had lasted at least a month, with the labor negotiations.

But, in general, the company was a pretty well-run company. I don't think it's very well run today, but the San Francisco Yellow Cab was a very well-run company. The people that had started it were all ex-cab drivers. There were four or five of them -- Lansing [W.L.] Rothschild and Joe Baldi and George Wooster and Douglas Newton. There were four of them and they owned most of it. They had all been either cab drivers or something like that and they built a very fine business. They were very proud of the quality of their service and good equipment and ran, I think, a very high class company. But it's a very difficult business now because of all the very large labor factors, and many of the drivers now are sort of itinerant. They may take the job for a while, but, in those days, they were real old timers. I mean, some of these fellow drove a cab for twenty-five years and they knew everybody in their district and they prided themselves on their business. It became more and more difficult because of labor problems.

The Chauffeurs' Union, which was the union that we dealt with, was a division of the Teamsters Union and they were a pretty tough bunch to do business with. I suppose from their point of view they were protecting the interests of their employees, but that is one of the reasons why cab fares in this area have always been very high. It's highly unionized. In other parts of the country, the cab drivers were not union. They would sort of work for whatever they could and they would exist on their tips and maybe a percentage. Here there was always a minimum daily wage plus a percentage and it kept going up and up and up.

I do remember being involved in one interesting incident. There were many interesting incidents because it's sort of a colorful kind of a business with some seamy sides to it. Cab

MF: drivers make a little illegal money on the side and there are all kinds of terms that they use. They talk about "side money." But I remember when the first problems related to minority employees, particularly black drivers -- we hadn't had any in San Francisco. We had a lot in Los Angeles because, down there, management and the union were not quite as tough. The problem really was with the union. They would not allow these black men to drive. They wouldn't allow them in the union, and we had a contract we couldn't employ non-union people. They were very, very tough about it, but we finally did get black drivers in.

It was interesting to hear these stories in Los Angeles. They had a fair number of black drivers, some of them on a segregated basis. They had different operations in Los Angeles because they're so spread out there. Each operation had a garage. In one area, they would be mostly blacks because it was an area where there were a lot of blacks living, but they operated all over the city.

I remember George Wooster, who was a vice-president and ran the Los Angeles operation, would tell the stories. People would call in and say, "I want a cab, but don't send me a black driver." And he always said, "Well, I'm sorry lady. You'll take the cab with the driver that's in it, or we don't send you a cab." He said, "We had to do it that way. If we started any other kind of a procedure, why, of course we would not operate. For instance, we can't tell what the color of the driver is." The cab was dispatched by radio or phone in those days and whatever the cab was, why, they would take the driver that came with the cab. But there were some people there that when the cab came with a black driver they'd send him back. That's changed a good deal now.

Int: Was there that kind of trouble here in San Francisco? When was it that the first black drivers went to work in San Francisco?

MF: Let me think now. I really don't know. I guess it was after the war, so it was '45 or '47, or maybe even 1950 before we got many of them. No, we didn't have that problem in San Francisco. The problem here was mainly with the unions, not with the customers. The unions didn't want them and they would cite these examples that there had been a black driver at one time who'd shot somebody or killed somebody, so they didn't want any black drivers. They never thought about the white drivers having any trouble. The union, I would say, as they have been in other matters, was a very prejudiced group. They didn't like to associate with blacks.

Int: Was the Paper Box Company unionized?

MF: If you go back to my grandfather's days they didn't have a union, but in my recollection there was always one. I'm not sure they were all union. One of the parts of the box factory was the operation of printing presses where you printed on board. Now the printers were always unionized very strongly, but I think most of these women employees that did a lot of this hand work were not unionized. Later on they were, but there were many years when they were not unionized.

Int: Did you have labor negotiations there?

MF: I personally didn't get much involved, and the union negotiations then were not too tough. Well, they didn't call any strikes or anything like that, but I think the union was a rather benevolent union and good for their employees and not too tough for their employers. It was not a big problem.

BANK CHANGES AND WAR SERVICE

Int: When did you leave the Anglo-California Bank?

MF: I guess it was about 1940. I had started this chemical company in 1939, I think, at the very end of '39 or 1940.

Int: What happened that you decided to leave the bank?

MF: Well, there was a variety of things. My uncle had left the bank. He had some serious financial difficulties involving the bank in some litigation, and he was more or less forced out. My father was getting older, and there was a change in the management. They brought a man in from Los Angeles, William H. Thomson, and then he retired. I worked there for a year or so after Thomson came. I never got along very well with Mr. Thomson because he sort of looked on me as only being there, I guess, because I'd gotten the job from my father, through nepotism or what not. Oh, we got along reasonably well, but I could see I wasn't ever going to get very far with Mr. Thomson because he had come in to make some changes.

There had been financial difficulties. The bank was in pretty good shape, but there were some problems. Particularly my uncle had a lot of personal problems, litigation and financial problems.

MF: So I would say there was sort of a cold feeling between Mr. Thomson and myself, although he used to ask me questions about what I thought; I'd been there a long time.

I remember what really, I guess, precipitated it. I knew that he really didn't want me there but he didn't want to kick me out. I had a lot of friends in the community and the family was well thought of. So I sort of made it easy for him. I think I went and asked him for a raise. I hadn't had a raise for ten years. He said, "Well, you know, things aren't very good. We can't pay any more." I was getting \$400 a month at the time. I was a vice-president. I guess I was about the lowest paid -- no, not the lowest paid person, because even in those days, in '40, why bank tellers maybe got \$250 - \$350 a month. It wasn't important. I was working for my family -- that'd be my father -- and I had some stock interest. My father was paying me for handling some of his personal affairs.

So, Mr. Thomson said he didn't think he could do it and I said, "Well, you think about it because I think I'm entitled to it. You make up your mind whether you want to pay me any more, but if you don't, that's a pretty good sign that you don't think as much of my services as I do. I think that they're worth more, and I think I'll go and get more." So we parted company.

I had already been in this chemical business for a year or two before that. I'd started this with this man from southern California, Herman Harris, and it was building up and taking some of my spare time. I used to work on weekends and so forth.* So I had something that I could go into, plus quite a lot of other personal affairs of my father and the Fleishhacker Box Company. I got more involved in these various enterprises.

So then not so terribly soon, after a year or two, why the war came along and I volunteered and went in the Navy. That was in July of '42. I went to Chicago for a training course for a couple of months and then came back here and was assigned to a ship. Fortunately, the ship that I was assigned to -- I didn't know at the time where it was because everything was very secret and I had a hard time finding where the ship was -- but I found it was up at Mare Island being overhauled. So I got back here in September from my training course and the ship was there and didn't actually sail out of here till the following January.

*See also pp. 85-89.

MF: So I sort of commuted between San Francisco and Mare Island, and then we left here in January and sailed to Honolulu, Pearl Harbor and then later on to Australia. I stayed with the ship for a while and then was transferred, at my request, back to Australia to the Seventh Fleet headquarters staff. I got back here in September of '44. I also flew back on that trip, which took about four days because we stopped along the line at different islands and we only flew in the daytime. I came back and surprised my wife. Normally when you came back on leave, you came back by ship, which took about three weeks. It zigzagged around a lot. I told her I was coming home, but I didn't tell her when. You weren't supposed to tell anything, but she assumed that I'd be back, and I got here a couple of weeks ahead of time.

I remember I landed over at Alameda at the Naval Air Station and phoned her. She was down at our place in the country. I got home on her birthday. I think it was about a day before. Her birthday is the thirteenth of September.

Then I spent the next year here in San Francisco in the Navy. Fortunately I got a job at the Federal Building in the Twelfth Naval District at the Western Sea Frontier Headquarters. That was '44.*

*For additional recollections of wartime service, see pp. 281-286.

(Interview #3 - July 13, 1973)

WOODSIDE HOME, CONTINUED

Int: After we finished taping the last time, you were telling us a little more about your house in Woodside. It has a name?

MF: Yes. It's called Green Gables and that I don't believe is because it was built by Mr. Greene, but it was a house that had some gables and they were originally green. They're not green any more. That was the nickname my mother gave it.

We still use that as our address and a little sign out in front of the house -- in front of the property, as a matter of fact -- says Green Gables.

Int: You were mentioning that Elsie --

MF: Elsie de Wolfe, who was a decorator -- I guess they called them decorators in those days, interior decorators -- designed some of the rooms, specifically three guest rooms. That included the color and the furniture. It was her particular style -- the beds and the bureaus and the desk in each room, and the dressing table and the lighting fixture in the ceiling, which was a very simple thing -- but sort of little touches of color and design which were rather unique. I've seen some pictures in some of those magazines -- House Beautiful -- that would probably be of houses that she did on the east coast; I think Long Island was one of the places where she'd done that kind of thing. I think her high period was probably, oh, 1910 to 1920 or '15 or something like that. She was a well-know interior decorator.

Int: Had she worked with the Greenes?

MF: I don't think so. No, I think that was something else because most

MF: of that was just not very typical of the Greene type of interior. It was a little lighter and it was different. The Greenes used to, in the houses that they did in southern California where they did part of the interior, use quite a lot of redwood and wood in general, unpainted or varnished or shellacked or natural woods. This de Wolfe thing was more of a white with red and green or blue contrasting colors with little stripes.

Int: Did you say that you have also some furniture that was designed by Greene?

MF: Yes. We have one room which Mr. Greene, Charles Sumner Greene, designed and made. I don't know whether he made all of it himself by hand. I think he may have had somebody to assist him. But this is a room that was added to the house a few years after it was first built. It originally had been an outdoor porch which was closed in and then he did the furniture in the room, which consisted of a card table covered in leather -- sort of tooled leather, or incised, with a design on the top of it -- and I think the five chairs. This was in Philippine mahogany, which is a rather light color. It's not dark as regular mahogany. It's a little more of a beige color. And then four panels in the corners -- he did sort of closed bookcases or inside cupboards -- depict the four continents. Three panels over the top of the doors, around the ceilings of the room, three carved sort of panels are a design of the sunburst and setting sun and rising sun and things of that nature, with rather deep carving.

The furniture and these other things that I've mentioned are all of the same wood and of the same nature, and the furniture is remarkably fine furniture. I mean it's been there for well over fifty years and is continually used and is in perfect shape. It's made with dowels, and the backs of the chairs are curved and heavily rather deeply carved. It's very pleasant.

He did other furniture. It was sort of a little hobby with him. It was a home kind of thing. He had his shop in his own home somewhere where he did this. I was told by his nephew that some of the furniture he'd done is in some museum somewhere and is rather well thought of.

Int: Did you say that his nephew or someone in his family had brought to you someone who was writing about the Greenes?

MF: Well, he was going to bring this man but we didn't make the connection and he's coming back a little bit later. There have

MF: been books written in which the Greenes are mentioned. There's one which this Mr. William Greene, who is a nephew, showed me recently. It's on four architects in California, of which the Greenes are one, and it has in that book several photographs and designs and plans of some of the houses that they did in southern California.

The Gamble house in Pasadena is the best known and that's been given to, I believe, an institute or a non-profit organization of some kind. It's quite different from our house, but there are similar touches. You can see the Greene touches in both of them that are similar.

Int: You said that you had given some photographs of your house to someone else who is also writing a book.

MF: Well, there's another young man by the name of Robert Clarke, whom we've known over the last -- it's almost ten years -- who's doing studies on the Greenes. He's never really published anything of great importance. He's published little pamphlets, but he has collected all of the material that he can find, including the original sketchbooks and plans and books of account and so forth, which he got from the widow of Mr. Greene. He's at Princeton now, I believe. He's sort of an architectural historian. That's the thing that he delves into and he's specialized on the Greenes. I believe he's seen all the Greene buildings that are in existence in California.

Harroun: You said there was a Greene house in Carmel?

MF: There is one called the James house. It's a stone house. It's really near Point Lobos down there, and that was one of the last things he built that I know of.

Int: Did you say that some of the furniture at Green Gables was also done by Vickery, Atkins, and Torrey?

MF: Vickery, Atkins, and Torrey designed some of the furniture, specifically the dining room furniture, which consists of a table and chairs and some sideboards.

Int: Was that to your family's specifications, or the Greenes' specifications?

MF: I don't think Mr. Greene was involved in that. That is more traditional English furniture. It's mahogany that's painted with quite a heavy layer of paint so it looks like enameled furniture,

MF: and it's still in its original paint. It's worn a little here and there and the chairs have been re-covered. They were leather chairs and now they're re-covered in Naugahide, which is actually a better material than leather. It's synthetic leather, but it's pretty hard to get real good leather. But that's just as it was originally, and it's very fine furniture.

They did two or three other pieces in the house, in the living room, but some of it's been replaced.

Int: Did your parents bring things back from Europe?

MF: Later, yes. In that house there is some Spanish furniture that they bought. A table and a large chest and some cupboards and other chests are the Spanish furniture, which fits in fairly well.* That house has been modernized a little. The original lighting fixtures, for example, were made here in San Francisco by a firm, Thomas Day, which was an old firm in those days and was considered quite good. They were very heavy. They were large, descending from the ceiling with big, silk, round frames around them. Now we don't have any fixtures in the living room. We just have some of these little lights that come out of the ceiling, invisible lights that spread the light out. Little sort of bull's eye lights that they use to light paintings with in some museums.

Int: Our whole concept, I suppose, of the level of illumination that we require has gone up.

MF: Well, we use lamps and reflector lamps. In those days, lighting fixtures were really more ornamental than useful. They didn't give much light, but they were considered part of the design. We still have some of those old ones, which are bronze, in the rest of the house, but not in the living room because they really don't give much light. They were fixtures with a lot of little bulbs in them all over the place and they didn't give very much light, but they were sort of part of the design.

Around 1900 or so, you still had gas lights in some houses. You had gas and electricity. I remember fixtures that were designed in our house in the city that was built in 1904, the earlier ones which were later replaced, where you had both electric and gas

*Original furniture still in place in dining room (Vickery, Atkins) and halls (Greene). Guest room furniture original de Wolfe. JCF

MF: because electricity wasn't very dependable. It would go out once in a while and you needed candles or something else, so they had gas jets in the early lighting fixtures. Gas would be more reliable than the electricity.

ALBERT BENDER

Int: This is a question that doesn't fit in anywhere necessarily -- I noticed that you have here in your office a photograph by Ansel Adams* that was inscribed to Albert Bender. I presume you were acquainted with Albert Bender?

MF: I knew Albert Bender, yes. He was a patron of the arts.

Int: We have talked with a lot of people who have known him, and we have a good deal in our various interviews about him. Could you add some more recollections of him?

MF: Well, I didn't know him very well. He was a real patron of the arts. He wasn't a man of any means. He had very little money, but what he did have he used to buy art and he had a good eye. He was both interested in music and the visual arts, pictorial arts. He was a little man who had a sort of an impediment in his speech. He was known as "Mickey" Bender. He was in the insurance business and made a living that way, and he had friends who helped him, you might say, by giving him some insurance business. It was the thing that was done, to give "Mickey" Bender some business.

He had a partner who really did the business, and it was a sort of a way of helping him. He gave away and accumulated what later became things of considerable value. But he bought things at very low prices because he had a very good eye for young artists and valuable things. He was one of the local characters, you might say. He was an unusual man. I met him from time to time. I guess I didn't know him very well, but he made many friends all over the city of San Francisco.

He was, in his day, I would say, rather advanced in his choice of art and his knowledge of art. I really don't know how he acquired it, whether he was self taught or not. I imagine he was. He just had, I would say, a good eye for really valuable, important things.

*Golden Gate, 1932.

Int: Ansel Adams himself had a story about taking some pictures to Mr. Bender and Mr. Bender liking them and saying, "We must publish these," and phoning to half a dozen wealthy people and saying, "Will you subscribe?" They would all say, "Yes," and so ...

MF: I think he did that, and people trusted him because he had a pretty good record. I guess maybe he was one of the people who recognized Ansel Adams as being an outstanding photographer long before he acquired very much fame or reputation. He spotted that. Yes, he could do that. He could call up a couple of dozen people. Mrs. Marcus Koshland was one of his, you might say, patrons who helped him a great deal. I remember that she helped a good deal.

Int: To the impecunious artists, he seemed like Midas. He seemed as if he had all the money in the world! [Laughter]

MF: Yes. Well, I think he had a little of his own, but most of it was what he got from other people. He was, you might say, a middle man between the artist and the -- when I say he was a patron of the arts, he was a patron in a sense, but he was more of a person who encouraged others to help artists because he just didn't have the means. I know he was a man who never had more than just enough to live on because if he had any money he would buy some art with it.

I remember he used to wear sort of a battered old hat that looked like it was a hundred years old. I think it was probably about the first hat that he ever had. He didn't have any money to buy a hat or a pair of shoes, but he had money to buy art with. Those things were more important to him.

EARLY AUTOMOBILES AND MOTORING

Int: Another subject -- you mentioned that your family was very fond of traveling about in California and that you had some early recollections of motoring.

MF: Yes. My father never drove a car. My mother learned to drive a car about 1915, as I remember.

Int: My word!

MF: I sort of have a recollection of the first car that she bought because I remember going with the family to buy it and it was a Cadillac.

MF: We'd had cars before that, but in the early days of automobiling, you had a chauffeur, and the chauffeur in those days was a mechanic. He'd take the cars apart and put them together, and he was a professional. As far back as I can remember, we always had a car.

The first one I can remember, I think, was a Locomobile. All the cars, I might mention, that we owned are no longer in business. At some later date, we had one called a Lozier. We had that for quite a while and did a lot of motoring in that.

Int: Was that an American car?

MF: It probably was, but it was a French name, Lozier. This car that my mother bought was a Cadillac and I remember buying that, going to the showroom on Van Ness Avenue and California Street, which was then the headquarters of Don Lee, who was the Cadillac agent up here. But on the motoring --

Int: Your mother must have been a rather brave woman to drive at that early date.

MF: Well, yes. She didn't drive very much around the city. In fact, I don't think she hardly ever drove in the city of San Francisco. She'd drive down at Woodside. I remember this little car. It was a little Cadillac. It was a coupe. I learned to drive it soon thereafter. She had a chauffeur to drive her around the city of San Francisco. In the country she would do her own driving. It wasn't really all that difficult because there weren't very many automobiles on the road. You had to sort of look out for horses and bicycles and pedestrians then.

Int: You'd change your own tires though? [Laughter]

MF: Well, that was a problem. She couldn't do that, because changing a tire with the what were called demountable rims was quite an operation. You didn't change the whole wheel. You had to take the wheel off and then you had to take the lugs off and you'd take the tire. And if anything like that happened -- well, she probably had a fair idea of how to change a tire, but you'd have to stop and hail somebody to get somebody to come from a garage.

The tires wore out quite frequently. On any kind of a long motor trip you were sure to have one or two punctures in the course of a couple of days. They were blowouts, really, a puncture or a blowout. That's why a chauffeur was a mechanic. And you'd sometimes take the tire off and put the spare tire on and you'd have to pump

MF: it up by hand. Later on they had pumps that ran off the engine, but in the old days you pumped it up by hand. The hand pumps didn't have an awful lot of pressure, and it was a little more rugged.

But we used to drive. I remember driving -- and this would have been along about 1916 or '17, maybe, or even a little earlier -- back to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara and up to the north. One trip we took, oh, lasted several weeks during the summer. We went all the way up to the northern part of the state, up to Crescent City and down the coast through the Redwoods.

Of course in those days you didn't have any freeways. Most roads outside of the city were one lane or, possibly, one-and-a-half lane dirt or gravel roads. It was sort of an adventure. If you wanted to go a couple of hundred miles, you'd get started early in the morning and you kept plugging along, and stopped and changed the tires when they blew out, and stopped to get water. You were always putting water in the cars. You'd get up in the mountains in the hot weather and they were always boiling over. You carried an extra container of water.

Of course, the places that one would stop at along these roads were rather simple inns or farmhouses with a few extra rooms or something like that. We saw a lot of California, pretty much from one end to the other. I don't know what the population of the state was, but it was in the few millions rather than in the tens of millions as it is today, and we'd pick all the isolated places.

Int: When you went to Los Angeles, how long did you allow for that trip?

MF: Well, I guess that would be about a three-day trip or something like that. You might get from here to maybe Monterey in a day, if you were lucky, and then some place else, maybe Santa Barbara, the next day, and then a day from Santa Barbara you were in Los Angeles.

And we'd go up to Yosemite Valley and Lake Tahoe. Those were usually a day-and-a-half or two-day trips. Of course, I remember a couple of occasions, and I may be confusing these things a little, but on a few occasions we'd take the river boat from here to Sacramento or Stockton. We'd go by overnight boat.

Int: Did you put the car on the boat?

MF: We'd put the car on the boat and then we'd get started early the next day and we'd get up to Lake Tahoe or down to Yosemite Valley. As a matter of fact, the river boat thing was still in business and I remember many years later with my daughter, who was old enough -- our first child and I guess that would have been about 1935 or '36 -- we took a trip by river boat from here to Sacramento with the car and went to Marysville and up around that part. She recalls it very well as a youngster.

They were very elaborate river boats, the Delta King and the Delta Queen. One of them is now still running, I think, on the Mississippi River. These were much later, but the ones I was talking about as a child were more simple boats. Of course, there was a lot of traffic on the river between here and Sacramento, and between here and Stockton to a lesser degree, because, going way back to the earliest days of California, that was the main means of transportation between San Francisco and Sacramento. It was the only way. They were making the railroad later; but the river boats were very important.

Int: When your father went on business to Los Angeles, say, which I presume he did very often, would he take the train or would he drive?

MF: No, no. He'd take the train because the trains were about as good then as they are now, maybe a little better. Fifty years ago the trains were a pretty good means of traveling. They were a little bit slower, but not that much difference. Train travel anywhere in the United States in the early part of the century was pretty efficient.

Actually, I guess, it took about four days to get to New York by train. It was the only way to go to New York. Everyone traveled on them.

Int: You mentioned that the chauffeur had to be the mechanic. When did that change? I suppose it was very gradual.

MF: Yes. Well, of course, automobiles became much more simple things and more reliable. I think it's more a matter of reliability. The early automobile was not a very reliable thing. Something usually very often went wrong, particularly the tire business, and you could break a part -- the steering gear.

I remember one trip going to southern California. I think we were down north of Santa Barbara driving along and suddenly the steering mechanism broke and the car went flying through the

MF: fence along the side of the road and came to a stop in the middle of a field. I remember that we had to abandon the car and get to a place called Los Olivos, which is somewhere north of Santa Barbara, and spend a day or so there while the car was towed into the town and got repaired. They had to get a new part or make a new part, and we got it back on the track again.

But these kind of things happened quite often; the brakes would go out or fail or something of that kind. We usually carried a few spare parts and some tools. And if you could get to a blacksmith's shop or something of that kind, you could have the springs repaired, because they very often broke. The roads were rough and the springs would break and you'd have to get a new spring made. Any good blacksmith could make a new automobile spring. There were lots of blacksmiths' shops around.

The early automobiles -- now, this is going back a little before the time I'm telling you about -- were really called a "horseless carriage," and anybody that could build a carriage (and, of course, carriages were repaired locally by blacksmiths and others) could repair the frame of an automobile or the wheels. They used to be wooden wheels and they used to break once in a while and you'd have to get a new wheel or a wheel patched up. They'd patch it up some way or other. They were wagon wheels almost. The early automobile just came from the carriage, and they put an internal combustion engine in it. Later it was completely redesigned.

I think it was, say, about 1916 or '17, after World War I or during World War I, that automobiles got a little better. They had self-starters. In the early days you had to crank the car up to start it, and then self-starters came along. First they used air and then electricity.

I remember the first car I had, which was about 1919. I was about twelve years old and I had a car which I could drive down in the country. I could drive it into the city, but I wasn't allowed to really. This was a Model T Ford, which was a sort of a stripped down version made into sort of a roadster. The local bodymaker fixed it up and I was given this as a present. That was a Model T Ford, which was a very simple thing. I could pretty much take it apart and put it together again, but you had to crank it. I think I may have later got a self-starter, but I don't really know. I've forgotten whether I ever did. It wasn't that difficult to crank, except in the so-called cold mornings you had to turn it over a few times.

MF: I learned to drive a car, like I say, when I was about twelve years old.

Int: Well you had to shift with ...

MF: Well, the Model T Ford was the simplest kind of a device. It had what was known as a planetary transmission and you had three pedals in the middle. One was the brake, a foot-brake. Another one was more or less the gears. You had two gears, low and high. And the other was reverse, the middle pedal. If you wanted to back up, you pushed that. It was a series of bands, well, in a way, something like the modern automatic transmission only much simpler.

That was something that the Model T had. Other cars had hand levers to change gears which, in the early days, were on the outside of the car. You had to reach out and shift gears. They weren't in the middle and they weren't on the steering wheel. They were sticking way out. Of course, cars had running boards and big, circular fenders. But the Model T Ford, of course, became this terribly popular car because it was so simple. Henry Ford took everything and he made it simple -- there was nothing on there that wasn't absolutely essential to make the car go. It didn't have a self-starter. It had a horn, but that was a sort of a claxon that you pushed with your hand and it made a raucous noise. It didn't have a water pump. It didn't have a gas pump because the gasoline tank was under the seat and floated by gravity. It didn't have any sophisticated electrical system. You could get headlights, but that was an additional thing. I guess many farmers used them because chassis were high up and they could go over rough roads. That was really a marvelous invention.

Int: Did you drive much around the countryside then down there?

MF: Yes, I used to drive around Woodside. Before that, when we first moved down there, we had a pony cart, my sister and I, and we had a governess. We had a little pony and we used to go all over the place -- I mean twenty miles, all over the Portola Valley and around Woodside and up and down, because there was practically nothing on the roads.

It was a sort of a toss-up as to which was the most reliable means of locomotion, whether the automobile or the horse was better. The horse was a little more reliable. He couldn't go quite as far and as fast, but you were pretty sure that you'd get back unless something happened to the horse and it didn't usually. [Laughter]

MF: But I would say that the early days of traveling in the state were very, very interesting because it was an interesting state and there were so many places where there was beautiful nature and open areas and very uninhabited areas. Aside from a few cities -- San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego -- most of the rest of the state was just small villages, small towns.

Int: Well, I suppose you really saw what you were traveling through.

MF: Yes, you certainly did. You didn't travel very fast, and you stopped and picnicked along the side of the road and went in a rather leisurely fashion. It was a great education.

Int: It must have given you a good idea of the state.

MF: Yes. I think I got a desire for travel at an early age and have always been interested in traveling and seeing things.

You want to get back to the twentieth century? [Laughter]

CHEMICALS, INC.

Int: I think you mentioned to me, before we started taping, your interest in Chemicals, Inc. and then you said something about it last time. I think you told me that you had sold it in 1953.

MF: 1953, yes. Around the end of '53.

Int: So you continued active in it from '39 to '53?

MF: Yes.

Int: It was household chemicals?

MF: Yes. We started it. I say "we" because this man who brought the business -- Herman Harris was his name -- had some chemical engineering background and he had worked for the Clorox Company in the early days here, which was Oakland based. They made the same product then that they make now. Then he'd gone to work with a competing company that was started in southern California, which was Purex Company, and their principal products were this household bleach.

MF: That was a family company, the Purex Company, which has now become a very large national corporation. But there was opportunity for somebody else to get into this field on a slightly different basis. So we acquired a little piece of property over in Oakland and built a small plant, about 10,000 square feet.

Int: How did you happen to become interested?

MF: Well, I had been sort of interested in the chemical industries per se because of my father's connection with and founding of the Great Western Electro-Chemical Company, which later became part of the Dow Chemical Company, and it seemed like a pretty good business.

Mr. Harris came to see me -- I was in the bank -- and told me his ideas and it seemed like a pretty good idea. I was rather intrigued with the idea of getting a business of my own. I'd been in the banking business quite a while and I wasn't that interested in staying there the rest of my life, and other things that I've mentioned earlier.

So, we built this little plant over in Oakland and started selling household bleach, really on the concept of private label. There wasn't anybody doing that. We went to people like Safeway and United Grocers. There were these various groups of independent grocers who had private label products, mostly in the food business. I mean, they'd have their own brand of string beans or peaches or something, but they didn't have any private label household chemicals. So we went into this bleach thing and we expanded our business a little later. We started right in the Bay Area and then we went to southern California. We went up to Seattle and Portland and the western states.

I remember Mr. Harris used to travel around, and we distributed our business through food brokers that called on these grocery chains and cooperatives. We got along fairly well, but it was not developing very fast because we were always at the mercy, more or less, of our buyers. We didn't have a product of our own. We didn't have a brand name. If they wanted to come back and could find somebody else that could make it for a little less, well, then, they'd switch to another supplier, because there were other suppliers.

So we decided that we ought to get some products of our own and we talked to various people in the chemical business about what was new coming along, and there was a lot of development in household products. Now, of course, there are just hundreds of them. There are these aerosol sprays for starch and for furniture cleaner. You know, the grocery stores are just full of household products. There

MF: really weren't that many. There was this Clorox bleach and there was always a furniture polish or two, and a silver polish and so forth.

But the first product we went into was a liquid wall cleaner, which we called Vano. We just coined the name. We later had a slogan that our advertising agency worked out: "If you're not using Vano, you're working too hard."

Int: I remember it well.

MF: You do remember this? Well, we originated that. In those days you coined names that didn't have any particular significance but were, oh, euphonious or looked good in print and so forth. I remember I dreamed that name up by putting a lot of letters together. And the "V" -- you could do things with a "V." That was our first product, this household cleaner.

I remember then we tried to distribute that on more or less of a national basis. We went to New York and Chicago. I remember traveling around and introducing the product. It had mostly water, but it had some synthetic detergents. It was the early beginnings of synthetic detergents as against soap and we acquired the basic products from Monsanto Chemical and later from other companies.

I remember an incident. We went to Chicago. We used to go when there was a convention of food brokers where you could sell your wares to a whole bunch of prospective customers. Mr. Harris had worked out a little demonstration where he took his fountain pen and squirted it on the wall and then showed that you could take Vano and rub it all out. We were staying at a hotel in Chicago -- I think it was the Bismarck Hotel -- and he did this thing. For some reason or other, it didn't work. [Laughter] I don't know whether it was the paint on the wall or the ink in his fountain pen. It didn't work. Well, it worked, but all the paint came off with it. It was a very dramatic demonstration. It had always worked up till that time, but it didn't work that day. We didn't make a sale. We decided we'd better get another method and not be quite so dramatic, squirting it on the walls of the hotel.

Then we developed other products. We kept using this name. We went into the liquid starch, Vano liquid starch, which was for starching clothes with liquid starch rather than the old-fashioned cornstarch or starch that you cooked up, because that was sort of a messy thing. I think all starch now is prepared. It comes in a bottle or aerosol can or something of that kind. But we were the first one to have that liquid starch product.

MF: Well, it wasn't a great success. I mean, the whole business wasn't that sensational, but it did pretty well. We found that we had expanded our markets a little too much, but we then cut back and stayed with the west coast. Then we later sold it. We developed a whole line of products -- silver polish and a metal polish. We bought a little company that was in the silver polish and the metal polish.

Int: What was the company's name?

MF: Denny. Denny's Magic Emulsion it was called, and it was a silver polish. We did fairly well with that.

Then we developed a dry bleach. We still sold liquid bleach. We still continued this original business, but it was on a decline, and we made our own Vano bleach. The trouble with chlorine bleach -- Clorox -- is that it's primarily good on cottons. It's no good on wool, and synthetics were coming along. So, we developed this dry bleach, which is now also used by many others. It was basically hydrogen peroxide, which was a well-known bleaching agent, but it was rather expensive.

Then after we developed all these various lines of products with some degree of acceptance and the name Vano was well-known, we sold the company to the B.T. Babbit company, who put out Babo. They were looking to expand. They had a plant on the west coast, but their main plant was in Albany and they were looking for new lines of products, so we sold them the company and that was the end of that.

Int: That was 1953?

MF: Yes. But just prior to that time, Mr. Harris had died. His widow had an interest in the business, and she really wanted and I thought she should get some cash out of it. He had been able to get something out by way of a salary, but we weren't paying any dividends. I'd sort of lost my enthusiasm for the thing without him there because we were very close. So, I had an opportunity to sell the company.

Int: Was this your first experience in sales work?

MF: Well, no. I had sold before when I was in the bank. In the investment banking business, I had sold bonds and stocks. I had become a bonds salesman and taken some courses in salesmanship and things of that kind.

Int: This was a little different kind of sales.

MF: Yes. But selling is sort of selling. Even in the banking business, in the commercial banking business, or any line, there's a certain amount of selling. You have to find customers. You have to satisfy the customers. You have to give them what they need and you have to bring in new business. So I'd already done some selling.

But this was an interesting little business because we had all of the aspects of manufacturing, production, sales, advertising, transportation, warehousing, and so forth. We had a chemist and a little research division where we were working on all kinds of new ideas. Most of them never turned out, but we were continually trying to find new products and keep up to date with new inventions and new ideas. So it was a lot of good experience.

AMERICAN ADVERTISING COMPANY

Int: I noticed that you were associated with something called the American Advertising Company during this period.

MF: Yes. That wasn't much of a company either. That was something my father sort of got me into, I think. I mentioned to you that he'd owned a couple of hotels in San Francisco -- rather, you might say, second class hotels. One was called the Stanford Hotel and one was called the Willard Hotel. They're both in existence here. One's on Kearny Street and the other's, I think, on Ellis Street.

In order to get business for the hotels, he, I believe -- I'm a little vague about this -- had run into some young man who had an idea about putting billboards out along the road, sort of like the Burma Shave idea -- I mean, a series of little messages. This fellow had worked out a series of small signs and he persuaded my father to buy some of his services. This was a man by the name of Stanley Jordan who'd been in this business.

Then, from that, he persuaded my father that maybe they should get into the outdoor advertising business. It was really outdoor advertising like any other outdoor advertising company. He had a concept of concentrating on hotels. So we had my father's two little hotels. Along the road, you know, coming into San Francisco -- a dollar and a half a night. I think that's about what the prices were. It'd be a dollar seventy-five if you had a bath. These were low-priced hotels.

MF: Then he got business from other hotel chains in Los Angeles and Sacramento and then went into the general outdoor advertising business in competition with others. That wasn't a very successful business. My father got me into it and then turned it over to me. We always had problems in it. We couldn't find Mr. Jordan and we'd get complaints from people.

You would lease the site from farmers or people in the country and then, usually, unless they screamed a lot, you didn't pay them the rent until they made a lot of noise. I was always getting these telephone calls for such and such a rent payment.

Well, we went out and expanded up into Utah and Nevada. But, anyway, it went on for a few years. We sold most of the good signs. We had a few good ones in San Francisco and we sold them to the West Coast Advertising and sort of folded the business up. I wasn't very intrigued with the business.

I don't think I really got into that until I came back from the service. I think about maybe 1945, '46, '47, '48, the 1950s.

FLEISHHACKER PAPER BOX COMPANY, CONCLUDED

Int: You told me, again off the tape, about your later handling of the Fleishhacker Paper Box Company.

MF: I didn't get that on the tape?

Int: We have the description of it earlier,* but not your handling of it subsequently.

MF: Well, the nature of that business changed a lot. It was originally mainly what was called set-up boxes or stiff boxes. It was pretty much a hand operation and that was for hat boxes, shoe boxes, filing cases. But the trend went into what was known as folding boxes, which were made by machinery pretty much, including a lot of printing. Florist boxes -- we at one time had most of the florist box business here in San Francisco. And regular boxes that sold to department stores, and suit boxes and ladies' dresses and things of that kind. Then there were also candy boxes, which were both set-up and folding.

*See pp. 14-16.

MF: It required more machinery because the folding box business was a machine operation and also, as I say, the printing. The boxes were specially printed, so it was almost as much of a printing business as it was a box business. We had this plant in San Francisco. The old company had had several locations in San Francisco, but then the last one that we had was the building down on 401 2nd Street. It was an antiquated building -- now I'm going on into a much later period, I guess it would be in the late 'forties or early 'fifties. The building was, I think, a five- or six-story building, and at that time most manufacturing was going to one- or two-story buildings with the introduction of the lift truck to move and palletization, moving materials around. Before that you carried it up and down by hand and in elevators. And the building became antiquated.

So we bought a piece of property over in Hayward and rebuilt the factory and moved over there. We got some machinery in and had a much better plant. But it was still a highly competitive business. It was like many small family businesses that were in competition with, we'll say, large corporations.

Int: You hadn't taken it out of being a family business?

MF: It was still a family business, and we had put some new capital in and built a new building and so forth. We were able to sell the old building here at a good advantage because a freeway went through there. We sold it to the state of California. We bought this property rather inexpensively and built a modern building. But it was still a competitive business in that we had to continually be buying machinery. I mean, you went from a two-color press to a three-color or four-color or five-color press or whatever they were, and they were very expensive things.

Then there was more automation as labor costs got higher. And most of the people who were in that business were, you would say, fully integrated companies like the Fibreboard Company. It was the big west coast producer of folding boxes, and they made their own paper board from the mill. We were just purchasing. We were sort of a middle man, a sort of a finishing operation. We had to buy the board and that was one of the largest ingredients. It was a disadvantage to really be in the middle without having your own source of board or raw material. You were at a disadvantage because the profit was made in the board and little added for the finishing. We were just, you might say, the last stage of the operation.

MF: So it wasn't very profitable because it required capital. Then the type of accounts you had became different. In other words, instead of a lot of little businesses, you were competing by selling to, say, the frozen food industry, General Foods, which is a national corporation. They, of course, were looking for people who could furnish them the same type of carton all over the United States wherever they had plants, or at least all over the state of California or the west coast. So, being small and being regional or, really, localized was a disadvantage.

It's true of many businesses that went from the small, localized business. As the country got bigger and transportation got better and companies that were buying, say, our product were national companies, they looked to national suppliers. So that led us to make an arrangement with the Lord Baltimore Press, which was also a family company but larger, and they were located on the east coast. They, in turn, had customers on the west coast. I remember one of the customers they had was Max Factor. Another one was Avon Products.

They were becoming national in their distribution, so it was a logical combination. They were looking for a west coast outlet, a company that had some established business and had a foothold, instead of coming out here and pioneering by themselves. So it was a very logical combination. We combined the companies, or we sold out. We sold it to them on a cash basis at option to later buy the property. They eventually exercised their option and ended up buying the whole thing.

Then they, in turn, still being a somewhat small company, sold out to the International Paper Company, which was the giant in the industry.

Int: That plant still operates?

MF: I believe this plant over there in Hayward is still operating, although I haven't been over to look at it. But International Paper has several other plants in the area here.

Int: That's an interesting company history.

MF: Yes, from a one-man operation that my grandfather started, up the steps to a little more sophisticated, and then to a merger with an east coast company, and they, in turn, selling out to a national company -- which is not atypical of many industries, I mean, that we have in San Francisco. For example, there are companies like Folger Coffee Company, which was a family company, which now belongs to Proctor and Gamble, a big company that they sold out to.

MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER, SR., CONTINUED

Int: You mentioned -- again, in this same period -- that your father became, in effect, ill and incapacitated, and that you took over his business affairs about the time you came back to San Francisco.

MF: Yes. In '44 or '45, yes.

Int: You had had, however, a good deal of participation in them?

MF: Oh yes. From my early -- well, the time I came out of college, as I said. I went to work then. Then in the bank -- he was after all the president of the bank -- so we had this very close association. He, in addition to being a banker, had outside affairs and I concerned myself with those things to a great extent. I worked with him on these things.

Int: Did he give you a great deal of responsibility when you were a young man?

MF: Yes. He gave me a lot of responsibility and, on looking back on it, I think a lot more than I should have been given -- I mean than I was capable of handling. But he had a lot of confidence in young people. My father always had a strong feeling that young people could do things if they were told to and had to, because he had done it himself. He dropped out of high school and went to work to support his family. He always felt that chronological age was not a factor. Ability could be acquired and, if you worked hard and studied and learned your business, you could learn it very quickly. He always had this feeling, as I told you before, that it didn't take a long time to learn things. If you put your mind to it, you could learn it very quickly.

I think he was right. I think most people spend a lot of their lives -- this sounds a little critical of the younger generation -- going to college before they think they're educated and then, when they get out, they're not educated at all. They say themselves that what they're learning is not relevant. It can be relevant. My opinion is that it depends on how you use your learning. If you're waiting all the time to get this knowledge and then, suddenly at some point, become an educated man, that really isn't the real world. You get a little knowledge as you go along, and as you use it and make a few mistakes, then you become a little wiser, hopefully, and you don't make the same mistake twice.

MF: My father's idea was that young people should get out and make their own mistakes -- hopefully, not too serious in the beginning -- and then they wouldn't make big ones later on. But he was very strong on having young people around him. He didn't think too much of old people and he always strongly objected to any of his contemporaries or anybody saying they were getting old. He would always take violent offense at that and say, "You're no older than you think you are. You're not old. I don't think I'm old." And I'm sure you've known people, even young people, who act old. They're old before they're young almost. And then there are other people that really don't ever get old.

Int: In your first years of handling your father's affairs and your family affairs, did you keep checking back with him?

MF: Yes. But he would encourage people to take responsibility. In other words, he'd get the general points and say, "No. Drop it," or, "Yes. Go ahead." But then he wouldn't say, "This is the way you're supposed to go ahead and do it." That you were supposed to figure out for yourself. He might make the policy decisions and say it was a bad idea or don't get involved or something, but after that, then you were sort of on your own as to how to figure it out.

Then, of course, it wasn't quite that arm's length. In the process of whatever it was, I would go back and ask him, "I've got a problem here. How do you think you'd resolve this or that?" But I think the tendency was toward, "Don't come back unless you really can't figure it out for yourself."

Int: About when did you start making policy decisions?

MF: Oh, I don't know about that. It was a sort of a phasing out, phasing in. As I said, my father got older. He got less interested in business per se. I guess if you've had a long lifetime and you started very young, these things don't interest you so much. He would take less responsibility and so give me more and more, although I never really got involved in anything of any importance without talking to him about it.

Int: Did your father have other interests in his later years then?

MF: Well, yes. He read a great deal. He was interested in scientific things. He was always a great reader and he was very interested in anything that was current and novel. I know he started to fly

MF: as soon as aeroplanes were around and was always intrigued with the idea of flying in an aeroplane. He went out of his way to take trips and some of his contemporaries would say, "Oh, I don't like the sight of your aeroplanes." He'd say, "Oh, try it." He was great on trying anything and I think it kept him young.

I can't remember the dates exactly, but, oh gosh, it was maybe in the early 'thirties. He met a man who was interested in and who talked a lot about rockets. In those days it was a nutty idea to go to the moon. I remember him bringing this man to the house; I think it was a few years after we were married.

He brought this man, who was a German, who told us all about the possibilities of flights by rocket, which is now, of course, sort of a commonplace thing. Well, most people said he was a nut, that it was a crazy idea.

Int. What was his name? Do you remember?

MF: I don't remember the name. But this whole concept of flight, manned flight or rocket flight was -- this was before World War II, in which the Germans did develop these rockets and others. But this was, I think, even before that. For many, many years, theoretically it was possible to do things. I only say that as an illustration of the kind of thing that he became quite [interested in] and then he would read up on the subject and learn what he could about it.

He spent a lot of time at the Mechanics Library here. He was always going over there and getting out books on various subjects. He was interested in metaphysical matters and religious and metaphysics as a whole. I wouldn't say spiritualism, but the concept of mind over matter and ESP and things of that kind. He became more and more interested in that line of, I'd say, far-out knowledge.

Int: Was he religious in a traditional sense?

MF: Not really. Not very much, no. He was interested in medicine and advances in various things -- I would say a few fads. One was diet. He was always looking for a new one -- a meatless diet or all meat diet. He was always swinging back from one extreme to another. He liked to experiment and try things that were a little unorthodox. He didn't like to go along on any kind of a sort of pedestrian orthodox direction. He liked to find something different and

MF: explore it, whatever it might be. Innovative I suppose you'd call it.

I think that's why he got into so many different businesses and many different things, because it intrigued him, the idea of new -- in the banking business he was a pioneer. His bank, which was then the Anglo California Trust Company, was the first bank, I think, in the United States and certainly in this part of the world -- this would be way back in the early twenties -- that financed the purchase of automobiles on time. That bank developed quite a large -- they used to call it the contract department or the automobile finance department. Now, of course, it's a regular thing, but in the early days you didn't buy automobiles on time. You paid cash or you didn't get the car.

The average banker at that time, the traditional banker, would have the concept that this was a very risky kind of a business. I mean, they'd finance a house or a business or an inventory, but the idea of letting people pay for cars over a period of a year or two in monthly payments was a very revolutionary idea. But he didn't see it that way and he was quite right, because automobiles are considered necessary now -- nobody will let their automobile go. They might not eat, but once they start buying automobiles it becomes a necessity. That was an innovative concept.

And then the idea of branch banking I can't say that he originated that, but it was somewhat on the innovative side of banking to have branches. And they had these five or six branches in San Francisco.

Int: Well, I remember that there had to be waged quite a campaign on the state level in order to have branch banking accepted. Is that --?

MF: I think these laws changed. There are still states in the United States, many; I think the state of Illinois doesn't allow any branch banks out of the city in which the bank has headquarters -- they are allowed within the city -- and New York, up till very recently. So California was a pioneer in the idea of having this statewide banking system, but originally you couldn't have banks outside your own county or city. You could have them first within the city.

Int: Do you remember anything of that legislation?

MF: I don't remember what time that came along. Bank of America was the first statewide banking system, I guess, anywhere in the United

MF: States, although there were branch banks in England like the Midland Bank. They had hundreds of branches. And in Canada. But the United States did not have them, even statewide banks.

Int: You mentioned, I think, that you were president of the Bond Club, so I guess you knew all the bond people in the city. Did all the bank presidents know each other in this same way?

MF: Oh yes. Well, the major banks. There were a lot of smaller banks, of course, in those days. This was the period, as I say, in the 'twenties and 'thirties when the smaller banks were being gobbled up or absorbed by larger banks. But yes, certainly, there were half a dozen bankers --

Int: Did your father and Mr. [A.P.] Giannini get along?

MT: Oh yes. My father and Mr. Giannini were very close friends in a professional sense. I don't think they ever socialized. They were both on the board of the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company and my father used to see him then. I think they had monthly meetings. I remember he used to see him quite frequently. That was about the only board of directors that Mr. Giannini went on outside of the Bank of America. He was on the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. He thought very highly of it. I believe that was the only non-banking thing that Mr. Giannini ever got involved in.

He knew him and Mr. [Frederick L.] Lipman, who was the head of the Wells Fargo Bank, an oldtimer. Mr. [Charles K.] McIntosh, who was president of the Bank of California, was an old friend of my father's. George Tourny, who was the president of the San Francisco Bank, which is now United California Bank -- it was a savings bank -- and Mr. Joseph Tobin, who was the head of the Hibernia Bank. They all knew each other quite well.

Int: Again, making a rather small community of people who had like interests.

MF: Yes. It was a small community and, I would say, people knew each other. In the first place, the corporate structure in those days was somewhat different than it is now in many cases. They didn't have this mandatory retirement at sixty-five or sixty, so some of these people just stayed there for an awful long time. You know, like twenty or thirty years your colleagues were in the same slot, you may say. So that made maybe for a little more solidarity.

And now many corporations change their executives. They retire at sixty-five, but a lot of times they retire sooner, early

MF: retirement. There's much more change on the corporate level, the higher level of corporations -- a continuing flux.

Int: I suppose all the bank presidents now know each other.

MF: Oh yes. They do.

Int: But I wonder if they know each other as well as that group did.

MF: Well, I think not exactly on that same basis because they don't hold the position for so long. You're right. There is some difference. There's less of a, I would say, probably, a close friendship.

Int: I think you said that your father would go around soliciting funds for --

MF: Yes. For the Community Chest.

Int: And I suppose those would be people he'd go and see?

MF: Oh, he'd go see those people and department store heads, but a lot of that solicitation was really of individuals because the idea of corporate support for the so-called Community Chest is a much more recent idea. Corporations per se didn't give an awful lot of money. This would come from individuals or estates or family groupings and so forth.

Int: Let me just get this on the record. Your father died in 1953?

MF: '53, yes. Well, actually, today's the thirteenth of July. It's today. That makes it twenty years ago today. I'm reminded of the date because my oldest granddaughter, who was born on the eleventh of July -- we just took her out to dinner the other night to celebrate her twentieth birthday -- was born in the same hospital that my father died in and it was only two days apart.

OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

Int: Your mother lived for some time?

MF: She lived approximately ten years after. She died in '63.

Int: Did she live with you?

MF: She lived with us in the country at Woodside after my -- well, actually, we all lived together at Woodside in my mother and father's house. My wife and I had a couple of rooms there after we were married until my father died. Then, more or less, my wife and I took over the management of the place, although my mother was sort of a co-operator, and as time went on, she was, you might say, more of a guest in the house.

Int: Your sister,* when was she born?

MF: She is eighteen months older than I am and she was born in September, 1905,** the twelfth of September.

Int: She, I presume, has not ever taken part in the family's business affairs.

MF: Not really, no, although her first husband was Leon Sloss, who was a sort of a second cousin. His grandmother and our maternal grandmother were sisters, Mrs. Louis Sloss*** and Mrs. Lewis Gerstle. Leon Sloss was in the bank. He went to work with my father after he married, in the Anglo Bank. So she didn't take part, but her first husband did, in the family business. And he also had some relationship with some of my father's other affairs, but not to the same degree. He was older than I, so he got in there sooner. But to that degree she had a participation.

I wouldn't say she had any direct participation in the business affairs. Of course, she and I inherited some joint interests in things, but I did all the management of that.

Int: When did Mr. Sloss die?

MF: Gosh, I ought to be able to remember that but I can't. He had a heart attack in 1928. That's when I came back from New York. Well, he recovered almost completely from that. He was alive during the war. It must have been after World War II. I know I was back here. It was 1947.****

*Born Eleanor Belle Fleishhacker.

**September 12, 1905

***Sarah Greenebaum Sloss

****December 19, 1947

FLEISHHACKER FAMILY FOUNDATION

Int: You mentioned the other day that you and your sister, and perhaps others, have a family foundation.

MF: Yes. It's not a very large one and I suggested to my father that he do this. It must have been around 1950. He had a piece of property, a piece of real estate, on Market Street and what he did was to turn that piece of real estate over to the foundation and that was our sole asset in the foundation. Then we later sold that and the proceeds have been invested in stocks and bonds.

Then my mother left something -- part of her estate -- to add to that foundation and that's all that's ever gone into it.

Int: I see. And you and your sister manage it?

MF: Well, she and I did, and we had a third party, an attorney. But now my sister's son, Peter Sloss, who's an attorney, and my daughter and my oldest son* -- there's five of us on the board, and more and more they're taking over.

Int: What are its principal interests?

MF: In the main, most of our money goes to support those things that my mother and father were interested in so that there can be a perpetuation of their intentions.

Int: You mentioned that you've given a piano to the music school.**

MF: Yes, but it's a little more than that. We annually give to the United Crusade, for example, an amount that's not nearly enough because it's about the amount that my mother and father gave and, of course, in the intervening years, the needs are larger, but the foundation hasn't increased in size. And the symphony and the San Francisco Museum of Art and certain cultural and charitable things that they were interested in -- I would say a major portion, over fifty per cent, goes for that on a continuing basis.

*Mortimer Fleishhacker III

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MF: The other things that we've gone into have been, oh, just a variety of things. For example, we gave some money to the University of California in my father's name to the International House because he was one of the founders of that. It was for the rebuilding of a library over there. We've given money to the universities, to some of the hospitals, to Mt. Zion Hospital -- from time to time those kind of major capital things that we sort of feel if my mother and father were here, they would be giving to it and we have their money, so we act on it.

Then the other things are, well, innovative ideas in recent years in the minority fields, and then we've given some money to help get started some of the innovative things in the drug therapy field. Oh, we range over all kinds of things, usually small grants of \$1,000, \$2,000, or \$3,000 to things that they would be interested in, trying to bear in mind the kind of things that they might have been interested in. But as time goes on, why, things change and there are not so many of those.

But it is our policy to continue those things in San Francisco that they were identified with.*

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

Int: You mentioned International House. How did your father happen to be involved in starting it?

MF: Well, he was on the Board of Regents and this was a gift from John Rockefeller to the University of California. (He established one in New York and one in Chicago.) I really don't know; I presume among the regents he was one that was selected to go on that board to get it started.

Int: I see. But he then took a personal interest in it?

MF: Yes. And he served on the board for quite a few years and then -- well, I don't know whether I succeeded him. Anyway, I've been on for a long time.

Int: Is it still as active as it was when it was established?

*For additional discussion of the family foundation, see pp. 286-288.

MF: It's still about the same, yes. It's about the same size. It has about fifty per cent American students and fifty per cent foreign -- almost entirely graduate students. It has its problems, financial problems, because the costs of maintaining the building are going up, maintaining the program, and it does not have any substantial endowment, so it has to break even on the basis of what we charge for fees. We don't like it very much because we have to keep raising the fees to pay our [costs.]

We had a small endowment and we got a second gift from Mr. Rockefeller, from David Rockefeller, a few years ago to rehabilitate the building. The building's nearly forty years old, I guess, and we had to put in new elevators and fix the roof and so forth. Like many public buildings and many buildings supported by non-profit organizations, you don't spend the maintenance that you have to till it all sort of falls apart and then you have to put it back together again.

So we did have a little reserve and a little endowment, but we've used it all up pretty much in keeping the building up. The building is in pretty good shape for an old building, but now we have to put in carpets and rugs and it requires painting, water-proofing, new boilers, and new kitchen equipment. It's sort of a dormitory/hotel.

Int: It's my impression that the regular dormitories at the University of California have not drawn much enthusiasm from the students, but I guess that International House has.

MF: Well, we're always full. The dormitories have had a comeback in the last year or two. A few years ago, the students wanted to live outside, but a lot of them have come back. The dormitories are fairly well filled over there. We keep an eye on them because our rates are based about the same as the dormitories; and our food costs and so forth. We try and keep in touch with them.

But the International House is, I would say -- whether it's served its original purpose might be an open question. The purpose and the concept was you bring foreign students and American students together, they get to know each other, and it makes for peace in the world and harmony. Whether we've got any more of that or less as the result of that -- But I've talked to the students over there from time to time. I've sort of tried to ask that question, and they seem to think that it has worked -- both the American and the foreign. Of course it works three ways really. The foreign students get to know other foreign students. The Asians and the Europeans

MF: and the South Americans get to know each other in a more intimate setting than they would get just living in the dormitory because they do have programs. They do go out in the country, and they do have dinners and dances and theatrical performances to a certain degree. I think it does a little to bring people of diverse backgrounds a little closer together. But whether or not knowing each other is good or bad, I'm not quite so sure. [Laughter] You can have plenty of fights right within the family! But I guess on balance that it does contribute something to the stability and the peace of the world.

Int: Maybe things would have been worse.

MF: That's always the question you can't answer. No, there are some pretty good examples, I think, of where foreign students have come here and gone to a place like the International House and gone back to their own countries. They have a better understanding of the United States than they otherwise would, and they have a better understanding of American students and students from other countries. I think it has some advantage.

Int: Does that have any special relationship with the United Nations Association?

MF: No. They cooperate with them sometimes, but it's not really a direct connection or anything. Actually, it's an independent organization very much under the aegis of the University because it's on University property. But we have an independent board and we're supposed to run our program, although the Berkeley chancellor is ex-officio the president of the board of directors, and I've seen quite a few of them over the years, starting with Clark Kerr and going up to Chancellor Bowker* and all those in between.

Int: Which of your activities specially, or was it the sum of all of them, that made you a Berkeley Fellow?

MF: Oh, I don't know. Somebody else would have to know that.

Int: [Laughter] They didn't say?

MF: No. I guess because you've been involved in things. I have been fairly close to the University of California with International House and, from time to time, have cooperated with whoever was the president or chancellor on certain things in which the University had some interest. I've never made a great contribution to the University of California. I'm certainly not any kind of an outstanding alumnus, but I've always been interested in it and

*Albert H. Bowker

MF: supported it financially and in other ways.

Int: Well, they must assume that your contribution is above average.

MF: Well, I'm interested. And I've always known -- I mean, for example, now I know Charles Hitch quite well, and I've known all the presidents there. Of course, there haven't been that many. Bob Sproul, who was working there when I went to college in 1923 -- he was in the controller's office, I think -- his whole career was the University of California. He got out of college and went to work for the University and that's all he ever did, and I've known him all those many years.

Int: You're a member of the Sproul Associates?

MF: Yes, the Robert Gordon Sproul Associates.

Int: How did that happen to be formed?

MF: Well, that's really, you know, to put it crudely, a fund raising device and was started by people who wanted to honor Bob Sproul. You pay \$1,000 a year and as long as you pay \$1,000 a year or more, you're a member of the Robert Gordon Sproul Associates.

Int: It was a good idea, it sounds like.

MF: It was a very good idea. I don't know how many they have now at this point -- about a hundred or something. They have an affair every year where they invite the members to come over to the Chancellor's House now and have dinner together and talk about old times.

(Interview #4 - July 16, 1973)

THE TEMPLE PLAYERS

Int: This morning, perhaps, we could talk about your work with Temple Emanu-el and Mount Zion Hospital, which I believe were concurrent, weren't they?

MF: Yes, they were about the same time. I was involved in Mount Zion before I was involved in Temple Emanu-el. I think I served as president of both organizations at the same time, but I'd had a much longer background with Mount Zion.

Int: Had you not, as a young man, been part of a drama group at Temple Emanu-el?

MF: Oh, that goes way back. Actually, that's where I met my wife. That was an organization called the Temple Players, which was started when I was still in college, so it must have been around '26 or '27. The Temple had had this facility there that was really a theatre. They call it the Temple House. It's still being used, I gather. I don't know whether it's being used for theatrical purposes.

Paul Bissinger, who was an old friend of mine who died a few years ago, had been active in theatricals at Stanford as a director and I think he'd even done a little acting. He may have graduated from Stanford at that time. I think he was about a year ahead of me. The rabbi of the Temple Emanu-el at that time was Louis I. Newman and I believe it was his suggestion that maybe the Temple should have some kind of a theatrical group, partly because they had the facilities to do it in. They had a very nice little stage there in the theatre.

MF: So we organized this thing. I say "we." Paul Bissinger and I, I think, were the principal organizers of it. I remember we went around and raised a little money. I guess it was a small amount to, oh, get the thing started and buy some scenery. We had a series of plays there for some time. It really culminated quite a few years later when they put on a performance of The Dybbuk, which was quite successful.

But we got some local people and other young people and put on some performances. I think one was a Philip Barry play and a Somerset Maugham play, situation comedies and current things. We engaged for different plays, at various times, different directors or approaches. It was reasonably successful.

Int: Who were some others who were prominent participants in the Temple Players?

MF: Conrad Kahn, Henrietta Lichenstein, Ralph Cahn, David Wolf, George Levison, Janet Choynski, Charles Levison and Leon Hecht.

Int: Had you always been interested in drama?

MF: Oh, I guess so. I had done a little of that. I guess a lot of children do. As youngsters in the basement of my parents' house in San Francisco, I know, we put on some plays. I was maybe ten years old.

Int: Did you have a little stage there?

MF: Yes. There was a little stage in the basement there and it was a ballroom, really, with a stage at the end.

But the Temple Players was way back in the 'twenties, so I would say I had a connection, maybe, with the Temple at that time, but that really had no connection with my later going on the board of directors.

MOUNT ZION HOSPITAL

MF: Actually, as far as Mount Zion Hospital -- I became somewhat interested there after the war. I was asked to go on the board about 1947, I don't recall just what year, but I know that it was soon thereafter we were involved in a new building program.

Int: Was there any relationship between your going on the board and the building program? Did they put you on it in anticipation?

MF: Well, probably something of that kind -- expansion of the hospital. You see, nothing had happened in the way of modernization of hospitals or modernization of any facilities during the war. There was sort of a freeze on anything, and the buildings were quite old.

It was one of the first in San Francisco after the war to build a new addition, and since that time all the other hospitals have -- Children's Hospital, St. Luke's, St. Mary's, St. Francis, French Hospital -- to the point where now Mount Zion is one of the oldest hospitals, because all the others have sort of caught up and gone ahead of them. So they're now making plans for not really adding to the hospital, but modernizing some of the facilities.

Int: Was that done with Hill-Burton funds?

MF: I really don't remember. I believe we did get some Hill-Burton funds. I'm not sure we had that at the beginning; that first addition was put on I guess it must have been before 1950. Then later they added some more. I know the later ones were Hill-Burton.

Int: I just remembered something that's perhaps not connected with this at all, but let me ask about it. There was a building, a very advanced building, called the Maimonides Health Center.

MF: Maimonides, yes. That was on Sutter Street and that had been designed by this famous architect, Eric Mendelsohn, who had done a building in Israel. He built that building, which was a convalescent home or a long-term care type of facility.

Int: Was that at all connected with Mount Zion?

MF: It really wasn't connected. The only connection was that at the time that the Mount Zion Hospital building addition was put on, there were several people in the community connected with the hospital who wanted to have him as the architect for the Mount Zion Hospital. Now I remember. There was some controversy about it because the building he built on Sutter Street proved to be a most impractical building. It was later all rebuilt. It was rather a beautiful design but entirely impractical because, talking about architects, he was one of these architects who built things the way he wanted them.

MF: He had built a hospital before in Israel, and he designed this one here something like there, with open balconies and lots of open space, which was fine for a warm climate but pretty useless for a San Francisco climate. So there was a considerable controversy.

There were several architects under consideration for Mount Zion, and he was one of them. Finally, the architect selected for that was Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, who were really just starting their activities in San Francisco. They had just opened a small office here and they got the contract. I must say they didn't do too good a job either, because later on a lot of the things they did had to be redone. They put large glass windows facing the south, which made it very cold in the winter and very hot on sunny days.

That was a period of architects using a lot of glass. They built these buildings in New York on Park Avenue, and it was the glass age. It didn't work out well for hospitals. It was an impractical idea. But other than that, I think, they did a pretty good job. It was one of the first new hospitals built in San Francisco for many, many years, so they learned a little by experience, and others learned.

But I was involved in that as a member of the building committee and then I was quite actively involved in the construction of the hospital.

Int: In what way?

MF: Well, working with the architect and with various consultants and with the doctors. I remember we asked each department -- medical departments and surgical and others too -- to approve the plans, and then they had suggestions of what they wanted. But actually, they didn't know too much about it because there hadn't been very many new hospitals built. But in its day, when it was built, it was quite a modern, up-to-date building.

I remember there was controversy about how it would look, so they built a mock-up room which they put on the roof of the old building. Well, just a sample room. They even went into getting some furniture so that people could walk in and out to see how it would look. They had all the more advanced ideas of piping in oxygen and having an intercommunicating system, so that the nurses could be called.

Int: Was the nursing staff consulted?

MF: They were consulted. Everybody was consulted. And then when it was all built it didn't quite come out the way anybody thought it was going to be, because most of the people involved, or many of them (which is, I guess, the natural thing) hadn't had much experience in building. Unless you've had experience and can read a blueprint and you know what it's going to really look like -- So I would say it was an experimental thing, but it turned out quite well.

Int: It was really in the midst of more of a nursing than a medical revolution, wasn't it? Hadn't the whole concept of nursing changed?

MF: It certainly had. At that time Mount Zion had, and did have for quite a few years, their own school of nursing, which was a building on Sutter Street. Of course, in earlier days and, well, for quite some time, all of these hospitals in San Francisco had schools of nursing. You had the student nurse who, as an apprentice type of operation, did a certain amount of care for patients.

That's all gone. There are no such things as student nurses. I think St. Mary's has still a school of nursing, but the nursing has changed to the point where you have these various gradations. In those days, you had a nurse, a registered nurse, and a student nurse. Now you have an RN, who's a college graduate and gets most of her training, really, in a classroom more, and they all have some practical training. Now you have that nurse, and you have the LVN, the licensed vocational nurse, who's usually a high school graduate, and you have the nurse's aide and the orderly. It's a whole hierarchy and the division of labor is more precise now.

The RN is the only one who normally administers medication, and they're more utilized in surgery and intensive care and special units, in pulmonary-care units and things of that kind. The general nursing service, which is a good deal less than it was, is done mostly by the LVN's.

Int: When I recall Notre Dame Hospital (which, you remember, was Dante) and think of those long corridors! Nurses had to go running from end to end. That whole concept changed, didn't it?

MF: Yes. Well, Dante, before that, was originally Adler Sanatorium. It was privately owned by Mrs. Adler. As a matter of fact, I went there and had my tonsils out at the age of about fifteen or sixteen, and my children were born there. By then it had become Dante, and it was a very deluxe kind of a place. It had the best food in town. I remember they used to give you oysters on the half shell there, [laughter] which doesn't exist any more.

MF: But it was a very deluxe sanitorium, and it really wasn't considered as a hospital. You didn't go there if you were really sick. It was a good place for people with, we'll say, a nervous upset or recovery, although it was a very popular place to have obstetrics. They had a small surgery there, but they didn't have any kind of an attending staff of physicians as they did in a real -- it wasn't considered an acute hospital. It became more so under Dante, although it was never really a complete hospital. They never had many surgical cases there.

Int: Getting back to Mount Zion, it was a time of change?

MF: It was a radical change. It was a change in the concept of nursing. It was a change in the concept of the practice of medicine to some degree. I would say more scientific medicine and more specialization.

Somewhat prior to that, really going back, maybe even before the war, there were more general practitioners, the family doctor kind of a thing, and that has completely disappeared now, where practically every doctor in a hospital is a specialist. There are maybe not even too many general surgeons. They're specialists, and there's a great degree of specialization in medicine.

It was a very interesting experience, the years I spent in the hospital. I got familiar with other hospitals in San Francisco. We started, at that time, joint labor negotiations and some attempt at joint purchasing. Now they have a lot of that. Almost all the hospitals had their own laundry. Now the hospitals own a laundry jointly instead of doing the laundry. I remember those things in building the hospital -- the type of laundry and the type of kitchen we had. So I got somewhat involved and somewhat familiar and also served on this joint committee, or helped form this committee, of hospitals who did their labor negotiations jointly.

At the present time there are two groups in the Bay Area. You may have read that one strike has just been settled by one group of hospitals and another one is threatened. During the time I was president of the hospital, we had a large degree of unionization, to the point where almost everybody in the hospital now belongs to some kind of a union or an association.

Int: Did you sit in on negotiations yourself?

MF: We had some. We had a sit-down strike, I remember, while I was the president of the hospital, the first sit-down strike in a hospital. That was the laboratory workers. The dispute was on whether or not

MF: the hospital would recognize their union representative as a bargaining agent. At that period there were a lot of strikes all over the United States which were really to get union recognition and, of course, there was a resistance. That came in the steel industry and the motor industry, where they really invented the sit-down strike, where they came in and sat down.

I remember all these laboratory technicians that came and sat down in the hospital director's office and tried to paralyze the operation and, in a sense, they almost accomplished that.

Well, this is wandering around on the hospital business, but high points -- I remember, while I was president, there was a very interesting occurrence where there was the kidnapping of a baby in the hospital. A woman came in. We didn't know at the time, but anyway, a baby in the obstetric ward disappeared. I remember being out at dinner and being called by the director of the hospital and rushing out to the hospital. The hospital was surrounded by police. I never saw so many police. There might have been twenty or thirty motorcycle policemen and cars and they were trying to find out if anybody had seen the child disappear.

They eventually found the child unharmed, and it was one of these rather strange cases. A woman wanted a child. She had a desire to get a child, so she went to the hospital and she walked in and picked up a baby out of a crib and walked out and nobody saw the event. They now have all kinds of security, more security. They close the doors and somebody's supposed to be there and people aren't supposed to be admitted. I know you've noticed in the hospital that the employees all have a badge on. It's an identification and if you don't have a badge with your name on it, why then you aren't let into certain areas. People just wandered in before. It was very simple to get a white gown like a doctor or a nurse and walk into a hospital.

There were some other kidnappings in other parts of the country for various reasons, but it was quite a traumatic incident. They tried to apprehend this person by putting out information on the radio saying that the baby needed a certain formula and it was necessary to go to a druggist or pharmacy to purchase this. They informed all the druggists in northern California that anybody that asked for this particular item, which was a fake [should be reported]. It was a placebo. It was something they concocted, hoping that this person would hear this and then go there and ask for this. Whoever asked for this XYZ formula or whatever it was for the baby would be apprehended.

MF: It didn't work though. [Laughter] Either the woman who had kidnapped the baby didn't listen to the radio or thought she could take care of the child. I think that there were alerts put out all over northern California and I believe the child was found some place outside of San Francisco. I believe it was Sacramento or Stockton or some place like that. But it was quite an unusual event.

Int: And they called you immediately?

MF: Oh yes, because it was all kind of a public relations problem -- what to tell the press, whether to acknowledge it and put out the information, or to keep it quiet. I remember the police set up a sort of a station out there, sort of a command post, with a special telephone situation so they could get information. Then they went through the procedure of cross-questioning all the employees in the hospital. They thought it could well have been an inside job and they checked to see whether any employees who normally would have come to work were missing and checked them. They made a real house-to-house search of the neighborhood. They thought maybe the child was nearby. It was a regular mystery story for a few days.

Int: You mentioned the hospital administrator -- is that what you call him?

MF: Yes.

Int: Was there a changing concept in administration too at that time?

MF: Well, very much so. When I first got connected with the hospital, the director -- they had called him a superintendent -- was a Dr. [J.A.] Katzive, who was an MD. At that time, almost all the so-called hospital administrators were MD's. They were MD's who, for some reason or other, hadn't maybe made a great success in their chosen profession and this was a less demanding one.

But just at about that time, there was a change to the point that the director or administrator of a hospital became a well-defined profession. You went to college and you got a degree in hospital administration, which meant that you had to have, I would say, a smattering knowledge of medicine, but more administrative management and financial bookkeeping. Of course, it involved the serving of food and the training of personnel.

MF: During the time I was on the board, we got a new director, a Mr. Mark Berke, who became quite well known in the community. He died a few years ago, quite a young man. He became president of the American Hospital Association, which is the highest honor that anybody could get in that profession. He was a very, very fine young man. Incidentally, I was the chairman of the so-called search committee to find a successor to the man that had been there who had proved somewhat unsatisfactory. Mr. Berke was not one of those who did have a degree in hospital administration, although we went through a whole list of candidates.

I remember one man from New Orleans and another man from some place in the middle west that we interviewed. Then we heard about Mr. Berke, who was in Cleveland, and he was an assistant hospital administrator, but he had never gotten the degree. As a matter of fact, he had been educated in England and was a podiatrist, which is a fancy name for a chiropodist. But he had practiced that as a young man and never gone very far with it and then came over to this country and started working. He worked in Philadelphia and he worked in Cleveland.

When he came to the hospital, he gave it a great boost. He was energetic and he knew his job. The success of the hospital -- and it did have a great degree of success, I would say -- was greatly due to Mark Berke and I enjoyed working with him for quite a few years. We were always close friends and exchanged information.

I was quite absorbed in the work of that hospital, first as vice-president, chairman of the building committee, chairman of the research committee, vice-president, and then president, altogether a period of about six or seven years.

Int: Did you also have a part in raising money for it?

MF: Oh, I did a little of that, yes. For our building campaign, yes, we did raise some money.

Int: Was your expertise with bonds of special value?

MF: No, it didn't have anything to do with that. It was just going around asking people for money, the usual thing. We raised most of the money and then we borrowed the balance from the Equitable Life Insurance Company. That loan has since been paid off. At the time, it seemed like a very large amount. I think it was about \$1,500,000 that we borrowed. We just didn't see how we'd ever pay it. Now, hospitals -- there's been one constructed

MF: recently in San Francisco that, I think, has a \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000 mortgage which they don't worry very much about.

But the proportions of money and everything has changed so much, you know, during about a period of twenty-five years and the whole concept of costs in hospitals -- the cost of building, the cost of running, the cost of staying there -- had just escalated fantastically from \$10 a day to now, I guess, \$75 or \$80 a day -- the cost to stay. Plus the procedures are much more elaborate. They do a lot more and you stay for a shorter time, hopefully.

Int: One factor is the unionization?

MF: Unionization is a very important factor because when I first got connected with hospitals employees were very poorly paid. The student nursing, for example, which was part of the nursing program -- the student nurses were getting their education, so they weren't paid anything. That was, we'll say, non-paid labor and they were pretty good. I mean, they were young and enthusiastic and I think they added something to the life and spirit of the hospital. They were eager to learn their job.

Well, of course, the whole field of health care and, particularly, hospital care, I think, has changed a great deal, for better or worse I wouldn't pass opinion.

Int: Was there an increase in outpatient services?

MF: Yes. There was a considerable increase in outpatient services. We didn't really at that time build a new outpatient department. We took an old part of the hospital and transformed it, but since then they've built a new outpatient department.

Then there was a great increase at that time in research, medical research done at private hospitals. Later, that of course became largely financed through various government agencies, but today it's financed through the National Institutes of Health.

Int: Did you have some notable research programs going there?

MF: Well, we had a lot of programs. I'm not so sure that we had any great breakthroughs. We didn't discover anything, although we had one man there who was working for years on trying to find a specific cure for tuberculosis. Then, later, he switched to something else, but he never really found anything, although he eliminated a lot of things. It was a trial and error process. He took a variety of

MF: chemicals and tested them and, at least, if he didn't find a cure, he found a lot of things that weren't cures.

Often research is accomplished that way. You eliminate the impossibles at least.

Int: What about psychiatric care? Was there an increase?

MF: There was. We always had a psychiatric department, but there was a great increase in it. We had a separate building across Post Street, which is now used for something else, which became the center for outpatient and there was also some beginning of in-patient psychiatric care. There was a part of the hospital set aside for psychiatric care for overnight or longer term patients.

Then we also introduced (I say "we," this is during a period that I was active in it) a new concept that acknowledged the fact that a person with a problem with alcohol was a medical patient, and they were admitted into Mt. Zion Hospital with that diagnosis. Prior to that time, they had been admitted, but they always had some other diagnosis because there was sort of a stigma attached to it. They were brought in because they had, oh, some kind of an inflammation, or a lung problem, or this or that. But it was always under a disguised diagnosis and we were one of the first hospitals that admitted alcoholics as alcoholics for treatment and they didn't tear the walls apart or act destructive.

There was the beginning of a new kind of treatment, sedation and so forth, for both, we'll say, mental patients to some degree and also alcoholic patients, with the knowledge of specific drugs for both kinds of problems.

It was a period of very radical change in a lot of things, particularly maybe more in the surgical field that had been learned during the war, and also the beginning uses of, well, sulphanilimide before the antibiotics. It was also the beginning of that, and this has continued to the present day. The type of patients you have in a hospital -- you don't have a lot of people with pneumonia and long-term illnesses of that kind, infectious. Infection is really not a major problem if they find out what the bacteria or the virus is, they usually can cure it.*

*For additional discussion of Mount Zion Hospital, see pp. 120-122.

MF: The problems are now more cancer and degenerative diseases and other diseases that have been isolated and discovered.

TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Int: Was your work as a board member and then president of Temple Emanu-el concurrent with that?

MF: Well, I got on the Temple Emanu-el board some years later and I didn't serve very long, not as long a period as the hospital.

Int: I think you said that when they came and asked you -- was it to serve on the board, or was it --?

MF: First on the board and then later as president -- I was a little reluctant about it.* I didn't think I fitted into that kind of a picture very well. It wasn't my bag exactly. That was really more related to becoming the president. I didn't mind serving on the board. It did become a more onerous job than normally because it was during the process of time, which I think I mentioned, in which we had a change in the rabbi at Temple Emanu-el. Irving Reichert was the rabbi.

Int: Did Reichert succeed Newman directly?

MF: Probably, yes. I can't think of anybody in between them.

Int: You were not on the board when Reichert came?

MF: Oh no, no. I was really on the board about the time he was leaving, and Rabbi [Alvin] Fine was engaged as his successor. That was the period.

Int: There was a controversy, was there not?

MF: Yes.

Int: Didn't Dr. Reichert come under a great deal of criticism?

MF: He did and he retired under, I suppose you might say, an arrangement whereby he left the pulpit and became Rabbi Emeritus. That was

*See p. 33.

MF: the title given to him.

Int: Was it a personal or was it an ideological matter?

MF: Well, it was a combination of a lot of things and I'm not too precise. I wasn't involved in the beginning. When I came on the board he was already under attack, partly due to his position. He was active in an organization known as the American Council for Judaism, which still exists and which I am a member of, which was labeled as an anti-Zionist organization. They never accepted the fact and do not that they're anti-Zionists. They're non-Zionists. This was quite a schism and has continued to the present date, particularly in the United States. - It's an ideological difference between the position of the state of Israel, which claims to have as its citizens all Jews living anywhere in the world who wish to return, and the American Council for Judaism, who consider that Judaism is a religion and a citizen of any country is a citizen of the country he chooses to be in.

I would say that that was one of the things that caused problems for Irving Reichert -- he was, you might say, in the minority among rabbis in the United States. I believe personally that his point was probably correct, although he was a little abrasive in his use of it. He used the pulpit to promulgate his concept. He wasn't as diplomatic about it as he might have been. I think that was the cause of part of his trouble.

It's hard to say. I think a rabbi's life is a very difficult one, and a clergyman's life. There are always some members of their congregation that they can't please if they have any kind of point of view. You'll find the same thing in the Presbyterian church today, where there's a very liberal wing and a more conservative wing. You'll find it in the Lutheran church and, of course, in the Catholic church with all the major issues about birth control and so forth.

But at that time, I would say, there was a division. It was on this issue of Zionism.

Int: I suppose there were people in that congregation who had been ardent Zionists since 'way back.

MF: Well, there were both. I would say that the congregation was more on the conservative -- well, not the conservative. That's really not a proper term because that means something else in Judaism. I think a majority of the congregants were probably non-Zionist, or at least not interested in Zionism. But there was a continual

MF: change, and newer members of the congregation were more interested in Zionism.

Int: Was there any split between younger and older?

MF: No. I don't think it was that. I think it was more, you see, in the period of the 'thirties and the exodus from Europe of Jews who survived the Hitler regime. They came to this country and they identified themselves with the congregation, and they were as contrasted with many members of that congregation who were second or third generation Americans, whose parents or grandparents had come over under quite different circumstances and they'd identified themselves more with the United States of America and less with the state of Israel or the whole Zionist movement.

Int: Were the other congregations, the more -- what? -- orthodox congregations --

MF: Well, there are really three divisions. There's the so-called Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox and the majority of the Jews in San Francisco were either Reform or Conservative. There was a very small segment in San Francisco of so-called Orthodox Jews. But as it went from the extreme Reform to the Conservative, or the less Reform, as you went from that direction, there were more people of the Zionist persuasion who identified themselves more with their fellow co-religionists in other parts of the world. There were many American Jews who came here and sort of cut loose from their background because they were the pioneer type who became, we might say, very Americanized and, of course, part of this argument was about the term "assimilation."

Jews became Americans and their antecedents had come, maybe, from a ghetto existence where they had no choice. They weren't really full-fledged citizens. They were denied citizenship and they were categorized. They were labeled, and their passports carried their designation as Jews. Coming to America was the place where they could forget that. Every American, theoretically, was an American, regardless of his antecedents or heritage.

The problems of the Hitler era at least demonstrated to those who were subject to it that you were a Jew whether you wanted to be or not because that's what it said on your passport. But those who had been in this country for years said, "No, that's not true in America. We've lost that. We don't want to be associated, or we don't necessarily want to be disassociated, but we don't want

MF: to be labeled in this country as any particular religion. We have freedom of religion."

The controversy still goes on. But anyway, to explain, that was one of Dr. Irving Reichert's problems, plus the fact that I think he alienated himself to some degree. He was a little bit particular as to which members of the congregation he wanted to be associated with and which he didn't. Maybe you would say he was a little aristocratic or you might even say more than that. He didn't put himself out enough to please some of the people there. He was rather selective as to the members of the congregation with whom he associated.

Rabbi Fine, who was a younger man, was brought in and, I think, did a lot to heal some of these wounds.

Int: Were you instrumental in his selection?

MF: Well, I was on the board at the time he was selected, yes, and we interviewed him.

Int: Was there a wide search made?

MF: Oh, a fairly wide search. There are never at any one time too many applicants for a job. This was one of the larger temples in the United States and one of the older ones, and it required a man that could adapt himself to this type of community. So, as I remember, there weren't too many applicants. He seemed to stand out as one of the very best men we could get.

Int: What were his qualifications?

MF: Well, he was young and enthusiastic. He had been in the Army during the war in a chaplain's post, I think. He was a very attractive man and he spoke well. He was well educated and he had a nice presence. He had a very, very strong dedication to religion, a very religious man. He just seemed to fit the bill pretty well.

Int: What was his stand on this controversy?

MF: Well, I would say that he was quite the opposite of Reichert. Yes, he was. He was more of a Zionist, but that seemed to be the way the thing was moving and a majority of the people in the United States wanted that, although he wasn't as active a Zionist as many others. He was somewhat of a middle-of-the-roader, but leaning a little in that direction. That seemed to be what the majority of the people wanted. I can't say that I was in agreement with him on that, but we got along very well, or reasonably.

Int: Were there other problems in the synogogue at that time?

MF: I don't know that there were other problems. There were always the usual problems of finance and membership and the type of services that are conducted to please the congregants -- the hours of service. But that's sort of routine operation in any religious organization.

Int: I believe that you said that you attended temple yourself then.

MF: Fairly regularly during the years. There were Friday night services and Saturday. I at least went to one every week and sometimes two, and during the more important holidays I spent the day there. It was interesting, but I think I got a little more immersed in religion than I was prepared for. [Laughter] I must admit that I did things not because I really wanted to, but because I felt it was a duty. I never at any time felt completely comfortable in that position.

Int: When you initially protested about being president of the congregation, what were their arguments? Why did they want you?

MF: Oh, I don't know. It isn't a job that too many people seek. It's quite time-consuming -- many meetings and many details -- and I suppose that I was sort of a neutral. I hadn't been closely identified with Irving Reichert and I was not closely identified with any other wing or faction and had had some experience in community affairs in general, in the Jewish community and in the community at large. Anyway, I was there and I finally said yes.

Int: I believe you told me that both jobs culminated in an illness. [Laughter]

MF: Yes. It was sort of amusing in a way. I had what appeared to be a heart attack. It was a heart attack. It had the symptoms of a coronary, but it was later diagnosed not to be that. I woke up in the morning with a pain in my heart and a pain in my arm and breathing so -- It was pericarditis, which is an inflammation of the pericardium, which is the sac in which the heart is. It comes from some kind of a bacteria or a virus. But it does things to your system which have some of the same symptoms, shortness of breath and pain and so forth.

So a doctor came in the morning to my home and he got an ambulance and took me to Mount Zion Hospital. At that time the hospital was very full, so I had to stay in the emergency room for

MF: several hours until they could find a room. I've forgotten exactly, but I know I spent two or three weeks in the hospital because they wanted to check it out and really get the diagnosis correct and be sure there were no injuries to the heart and so forth.

During that time, I really felt fine most of the time and I was spending most of the time with Mr. Berke, who was the administrator, because I was the president, talking about hospital problems. He said, "Now here you are. You can see them first-hand." One of the problems was, as I mentioned earlier, that the room I had was very hot. So, I said, "Well, people complain about it. Let's find out." So we got a recording thermometer and set it up in my room so we could see just exactly what the temperatures were at what hours of the day and whether it was the heating system or the air system or whether it was the sunshine. We made a sort of a controlled experiment which did determine that part of it was due to the extreme amount of glass and it wasn't the system. So I was in more than one sense a guinea pig.

But I really was well enough to get out of bed and walk around. The doctor just didn't want me to get out of there until he was sure that there weren't any permanent effects. I had a doctor who was quite careful at that time.

Int: Was that about the end of your term as --?

MF: I guess it was about the middle of it. No, I guess it was towards the end. But I always had an interest in the hospital because I had this close friendship, or felt a close kinship or friendship, with Mark Berke. Even after I retired as president and went off the board, he used to talk to me from time to time and I would see him from time to time. We'd talk about matters connected with the hospital.

Int: You're on the board again now?

MF: I'm on the board now, by choice very inactive, because I don't think a former president -- when you're out, you're out and you shouldn't come back and talk too much because if you do, then people sort of sit back and say, "Well, he did it before. He can do it again." That's not a very good way of bringing new interests in. You have to be an ex-president. Ex-presidents should sit in the back and not talk too much.

Int: I think that you were elected president of each of those organizations in 1952. Were they two- or three-year terms?

MF: Well, I believe I was two years as president of the Temple and I don't know how long I stayed on as president of Mount Zion Hospital.

Int: A little longer?

MF: I think a longer period of time, about three or four years.

Int: So since then you've not been remarkably active in either.

MF: Not in any sense active as far as the Temple is concerned, but in a small way connected with the hospital.

Int: By that time you had your own office? You had no business affiliations really?

MF: No employment, no. I just did those things. As I said, I was involved in the chemical company and did a few other things.

Int: I believe you said that your father had an office separate from the bank.

MF: We had an office together. We were in the same room at one time. We moved from one place to another at various times, but we shared an office together. He came in once in a while. He didn't come daily. But he'd come in in the morning for a while and go through the mail. He used to go up to the Family Club and play dominoes there. He used to go over to the Stock Exchange Club and sit around for a while in the afternoon, go home, walk -- he didn't spend an awful lot of time in the office.

Int: You were running your family affairs and all these things at the same time?

MF: Yes. He died in July of 1953, twenty years ago.

Int: Lots of responsibility you had those years.

MF: Well, a fair amount. Yes, there was a fair amount to do, but I don't consider I was overworked in any sense. I was always interested in other things.

I was -- well, let's see. It depends what year we're talking about. I got involved with KQED some few years later than that. I guess it was '54 or '55.

Int: Yes. We'll want to go into that quite fully if we may.*

*See pp. 149-163 and 169-172.

FLORENCE CRITTENTON HOME AND JUNIOR CHAMBER

MF: I was, I believe, at that time still active in the Community Chest, which may have then become the Community Fund. I was chairman of the social planning committee. I believe I was still on the board of the Florence Crittenton Home that I got connected with, also in a building program, about the late 'forties. I joined that board, I think, about '46 or '47. They sold their old property and built a new building, and I was the chairman of that building committee.

Int: Did you say that the board membership in that organization was about the first of your community welfare activities?

MF: Well, no. Before the war I had been involved with the Community Chest, the finance committee and the budget committee. I was the chairman of the budget committee.

Int: How did you happen to start that?

MF: Well, my father was one of the founders of the Community Chest way back in 1923 and then, when I got out of college I got involved in that and some fund raising.

Int: That early?

MF: Soon after -- '29, anyway.* Then I did some work I've mentioned of a little different nature; I was somewhat active in the San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Int: What particular aspect of its activities were you interested in?

MF: Oh, nothing in particular. It was just all the various things that the Chamber did.

Int: When were you active in the Junior Chamber?

*For further discussion of the Community Chest, see pp. 128-133.

MF: '39 and '40. I got involved in the Chamber, I guess, in the middle 'thirties, late 'thirties, at least three or four years before, and got to be vice-president.

Int: Was that part of what you would call the "downtown" group?

MF: Well, the Junior Chamber of Commerce was at that time a branch of the Chamber of Commerce, which they used to refer to as the Senior Chamber of Commerce, although it was the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce, like other Chambers of Commerce, was involved in -- well, I know one of the things that the Junior Chamber did. They sponsored a winter golf tournament. It was an unusual thing because there weren't many parts of the country where you could play golf in the winter time and this was promotion for the city. It wasn't always very successful because I think it was usually around February and very often they'd have a terrific rainstorm, something like the Crosby; they've had snow down there. I think we had snow -- well, practically snow -- in one of them that we sponsored. We later dropped that, but it was a San Francisco event long before the golf circuit became as important as it is.

But this was one of the things that the Chamber did and it was promotional for the city to bring business here, to attract attention to the city of San Francisco, to the business community and the financial community, and tourism and things of that kind.*

Int: Was it then interested at all in the physical shape of the city or the planning?

MF: I don't think at all. No, I don't recall that anybody in the Chamber was much interested except to attract industry and business. Planning was a sort of an infant industry at that time in San Francisco. I don't know when the Planning Department was established here, but it wasn't so terribly long ago. I mean, it was one of the later departments, so it was not a concept -- and most cities in the United States didn't really have any planning. They just sort of grew like Topsy. There were maybe a few restrictions about zoning, but it was a rather inactive kind of a thing.

Int: I think I interrupted you when you were speaking of the Florence Crittenton Home. Had its function changed over the years?

*See also pp. 65-67.

MF: Well, it's changed a lot in the last few years. It was then a place for unmarried -- and they were usually young -- girls to go during their period of pregnancy where they could get away from the world and have a sanctuary. They had an old house out there in the Richmond district. I've forgotten just where. I think it was off Lake Street out around 15th or 20th or something there.

They didn't have a hospital. The girls were taken care of by a special arrangement with the University of California, which continued for a while. But the girls could come there and live and have some kind of group living and get some prenatal training and maybe some education because they were mostly young, as they are today.

When I say it's changed, the change is now that unwed motherhood is not -- there's no stigma attached to it. In those days, of course, it was. Most of these girls came from out of San Francisco and, contrariwise, if they were from San Francisco, they'd go to some other community where they would sort of drop out of sight for a few months and then come back. They'd place their children for adoption in most cases, and that was part of their function to help them with the adopting process, or, if they wanted to keep their child, to try and make some arrangements for them.

It was a cooperative living situation. About the time that I got on the board, they were outgrowing their quarters, which was an old house.

Int: How did you happen to get on that board?

MF: Well, I was asked to by a friend of mine, Paul Wolf, who's still a friend of mine, an attorney whose mother had been active in it. Of course, the Florence Crittenton Association was a national situation. I mean, it was a national organization in a way -- well, a loosely knit organization with individual autonomous groups in many cities in the country. Dr. Barrett, I believe, was the leading spirit in that and I'm not quite sure where the original Florence Crittenton came from.*

But they needed to build a building, and we bought a piece of property near Divisadero Street -- it's a block west of Divisadero -- and built the building. I remember the difficulties in raising the money. It was not a popular cause. People didn't want to be identified with it. There was still the stigma. Unwed motherhood was a terrible thing. So it wasn't very easy to get

*The organization was established and endowed in 1895 by Charles Nelson Crittenton in memory of his daughter Florence.

MF: people to give money to it because that concept was that you encourage promiscuity by helping people in trouble -- the same kind of a thing that was more current in those days with mental illness, alcoholism, and all these terrible things that you just wanted to push under the rug. If you did anything to help these people, then you encouraged them. I think that was, I don't know whether we could say, a Victorian ethic or something of that kind.

But I found the work very interesting. We got the building built. We never had quite enough money. Oh, I remember, incidentally, what happened. We got down to the point where I was going to Europe. I think it was in 1949. We went over with the children. The contract to build the building was about to be let, but we didn't quite have enough money to pay the contractor, but we had the old property out in the Richmond District, which we knew we were going to sell. When we sold that, together with the money we'd collected in pledges on hand, we would have enough to build the building, although in the process of the planning we had to cut out a lot of things. We just didn't have enough money. I've forgotten the amount, but it was a small amount like \$100,000 today, a small amount.

I just didn't want to go to Europe and leave this thing. They couldn't let the contract. So I signed a note at the bank for the difference, personally, because I knew it would come in. Then when I got over to Europe a month or so later I got a cable or a letter from somebody saying, "Everything is okay. You're off the hook. We've sold the building, the money is in escrow, and your note will be paid." [Laughter]

Int: Was that your final triumphant gesture for them, or did you continue working?

MF: I came back and I was still on the board, yes. I stayed on the board. That was the beginning of the building. The building was built in fairly short order, in a year or so, and then later there were some changes to it. So, I think I stayed on that board for maybe seven or eight years -- six, seven years after that -- but less and less active.

Int: But that was still before the time when its functions changed?

MF: Yes. Well, the change is really very recent. It's since the legalization of abortion, the pill, and a lot of that kind of stuff, and the change of the community attitude towards unwed

MF: motherhood. I'm on their advisory board and I get their minutes, so I sort of keep up to date with it, although I never go to any meetings.

They are more concerned now with helping mothers with children, to give them advice on how to raise children, how to get a job, and it's not quite the institutionalized program that it was.

Int: Is it still residential?

MF: To some degree, although they have a lot of outpatient services where mothers can come and get advice. I'm not really too familiar with it. The program is still changing. But the traditional situation where the girl came in and spent quite a few months there has changed. They may spend a very short time there and they give them advice on where to go to get medical services, pre-natal and post-natal. It's more of an advisory service, although they still have facilities for girls to live there and I believe there are some that live there, but not as many.

Int: It's never been an adoption agency, has it?

MF: No. They've never been in that phase of it. The two phases -- the medical phase is always that they've arranged to have the girls taken care of for their delivery and then they've arranged adoptions through other organizations, because they're all well established -- although they did get involved in trying to encourage improved adoption agencies because they saw the need of it. Of course, the County Welfare Department in San Francisco has an adoption agency, which is a relatively recent thing, and there's the California Home Society and then there's private adoptions. But they never acted as an adoption agency.

(Interview #5 - July 19, 1973)

COMMUNITY CHEST

Int: Let's take up next the whole course of events with the Community Chest and the Bay Area Social Planning Council...

MF: Well, how far back in the days of the Community Chest do you want to go?

Int: You mentioned that you had been active in it before the war.

MF: Yes.

Int: So if you'd just start from there with the sequence of events of your relationship with it --

MF: Well, I can't be too precise about dates and so forth, but I'd say I got first involved with it, I think, in the late '20s or early '30s in a rather minor capacity. I was on the finance committee which was not a very important committee, but it had to do with signing checks and putting money in the bank and so forth. It wasn't the fund-raising end of it. I was in the bank at that time.

But then, some time much later than that, I think I had various jobs soliciting funds and things, and campaign organization, and then I was on the budget committee, which was a fairly important committee. I think that it was more related to what is now known as the allocations committee, whereby the funds collected were assigned and distributed to the various agencies. Of course at that time that was the San Francisco Community Chest, and it just was San Francisco. Now it's, of course, a five-county operation.

Int: Did each of the communities have its own local organization like this at that time?

MF: It varied in different communities. I know that the Oakland side was about on a par and started either at or about the same time as San Francisco. The Community Chest movement started in the early 1920s and I believe Cleveland was the first city that had a successful one. It was an attempt to take existing agencies that were all going out raising money on their own -- and, of course, they weren't nearly as many in those days -- and have one drive. It was a logical concept and it's still a viable concept because it's going on here fifty years later.

Int: But the allocation, then, became the critical thing, I suppose.

MF: Well, the two critical sides were the amount of money that you raised and how you allocated it. There was an interrelationship, of course, between the two because if you didn't raise enough money to satisfy, say, the constituent agencies, they became unhappy and had what was then -- not so much in the early days, but has continued -- called a supplemental drive. They didn't get enough from their main source and then they'd go out with a campaign of their own, which was a self-defeating process because the purpose of the thing was to have one drive, so that the manpower involved in raising the money and the donors' level of annoyance was decreased.

You become more efficient in the raising of it and you didn't go around two or three times a year. I don't know what originally was the number of agencies in the Community Chest, but say there were fifty or something. Instead of fifty independent drives, you had one. But this has been the nature of the thing. If you raise enough money, everybody's happy, but you never do because there isn't enough to satisfy the demands. The demands increase and they're infinite. The needs may not be infinite, but the requests are certainly infinite, and the purpose was to evaluate the amount allocated.

But the Community Chest was quite a successful thing in San Francisco in the early days, and it did involve elimination of drives.

But anyway, I was on the budget committee and I know I stayed on that and continued to serve. I was chairman of the budget committee at about the time of World War II, when many of us left San Francisco and went into the military service. The Community Chest continued during the war on a somewhat lesser scale. There

MF: was less personnel.

I really didn't get back into that phase of it again until after the war. Then I became associated with what was known as the social planning committee of the Community Chest.

Int: Was that a new concept?

MF: No. Actually, that was an outgrowth of an organization that was older than the Community Chest. When the Community Chest was started, there was already existing in San Francisco something known as the Council of Social Agencies, which was a grouping of the agencies themselves who got together to compare notes and to try and coordinate programs.

It really had nothing to do with the money side of it, but it had something to do with the coordination of programs -- for example, the various child-caring agencies. It was somewhat what was known as a field-of-service operation. Agencies operating in similar fields would compare notes about their programs and try to eliminate overlapping activities. The health field, the child field, the field of the aged, the field of the poor, and so forth were coordinated in the Council of Social Agencies.

Now, the Council of Agencies was merged into the Community Chest, but it was a division which later became known as the social planning committee of the Community Chest. It was a part of it. It was the planning side, the other side being the fund-raising side. Included on that committee were representatives of agencies both in and out of the Community Chest. In other words, there were representatives there of governmental agencies such as the San Francisco Department of Health and, I believe, the Board of Education -- non-voluntary agencies. They were still involved in the same kind of program field, so they still could continue to coordinate their activities.

I became chairman of that and, under the by-laws of the Community Chest, the chairman of that organization, which was somewhat autonomous, was a member of the board of directors of the Community Chest.

Int: In that organization, did you have anything more than persuasive powers?

MF: I think that's a fair statement. It was more persuasive. It did deal with such things as if a group decided they wanted to form a new agency to perform a certain function, they were supposed to

MF: and usually did go before the planning body to see whether they were duplicative of services already existing. Certainly, if they wanted to apply to the Community Chest for funding, they had to be approved by the social planning committee to determine whether their field of service was required, whether it was necessary, whether the organization was properly set up, and whether it didn't already duplicate some existing services. They conducted many studies and surveys more or less, as I said, on fields of service to determine maybe even if there were too many agencies so that agencies should combine and merge or they should go out of business because the need wasn't there any more. They were a social planning organization, really.

Int: And did the budget committee implement your decisions at all?

MF: Well, the budget committee was supposed to and did, to the degree possible, implement those things. But I use that term "to the degree possible" because there were sometimes other considerations than planning, such as, we might say, pressure for organizations which the social planning arm may not have felt were necessary, but the sponsors of the organizations might have been those that felt strongly that they represented donor groups who felt they wanted money from them.

I would say there was a degree of conflict there between, maybe, you might call it a true planning approach and a political approach. I do recall that there were certain agencies, for example, like the Salvation Army, whose program didn't carry a very high priority on the basis of the planning group. Some of their programs were good and some were not considered too good. But they were a very powerful agency in the community. It was hard to say no to the Salvation Army. They always had a very potent board of directors and they were well-known and they were in a position to go out and raise money on their own.

So I would say there was always a certain degree of accommodation between what the planning department said -- "This is all they're entitled to" -- and what the Salvation Army said to the the board of directors or the budget committee of the Community Chest -- "If we don't get so much money, we'll go out and raise our own money."

Int: That was always a threat?

MF: It was a threat and it still continues, as does this dichotomy or this division between a theoretical group of planners might say is necessary and what a well-organized group of citizens might say.

MF: I would say, as we're talking off the record, that the Boy Scouts is that kind of an organization. It's very hard to say no to the Boy Scouts. It's sort of like motherhood. You've got to be for the Boy Scouts, although whether their program has a high priority today as against some other kind of youth movement might be questionable from the point of view of the planners. But the Boy Scouts are a very potent organization.

There are others. I would say that maybe the Red Cross is another one. There might be a difference of opinion as to the importance of their program vis-a-vis other programs, but the Red Cross is a very well-organized national organization that people want to give money to.

But the function of the social planning committee -- we used to say (and I don't know whether I believed it), "We're not concerned with the amount of money involved. We're only concerned with the value of the program and how important it is and whether it should be increased or decreased, depending on its impact on its clientele or the people that require the services."

This is a rather interesting anecdote. Since I was chairman of the social planning committee I was also an ex officio member of the Community Chest board. That was following the by-laws. And my wife was elected to that same board of directors through her being on some -- I'm not sure whether it was the group work and recreation or the Family and Children's Council; but anyway she was on the board. We were both on the board at the same time, and this was during the time Mr. Crawford Green was the president.

After, I think, the first or the second meeting when we had both been present at the board meeting, Mr. Green talked to me. He said, "You know, this is a little embarrassing that you and your wife are both on the board, and I've been getting a little criticism that it might be nepotism or family influence or something. I think it's sort of a problem. What would you suggest doing about it?" I said, "Well, I guess it's a problem, but it's your problem. It's not my problem. As far as I'm concerned, I'm on there because I am an ex officio member of the board and there's nothing I can do about it. I'm there because I'm there, and I'm going to be there as long as I'm chairman of this committee. As far as my wife's concerned, if her presence bothers you, well, you'd better go talk to her about it." And that was the end of the incident. [Laughter] And we both stayed on there. I think it was only another year or so. But it was sort of amusing.

MF: I think that has happened on rare occasions. I guess that normally in organizing a board, if you had your usual procedures of a nominating committee, you wouldn't put a husband and wife on the same board at the same time. A. Crawford Green was a very, very capable lawyer and quite a businessman. As I said a moment ago, it was his problem and I didn't think it was anything I was going to do anything about.

Anyway, I stayed with that social planning committee for some time and then I'd served my term and discontinued my affiliation with that group. Then it was some years later that I got back into the thing when I was asked to become president of what was then the United Crusade. I think I severed my relations there some time maybe in the '50s.

UNITED CRUSADE AND PUBLIC WELFARE

MF: I really got back into the Crusade movement at the top. I became the president. Mr. Adrien Falk, whom I had known for years, was, I think, the chairman. He came to see me. You have the dates at which I --

Int: You became chairman of that committee of the United Bay Area Crusade in 1960.

MF: I first was president and then chairman. I think I came back in as president -- I have these dates on this placque outside here. President 1959-60, chairman 1961-62.

You went from the president up to the chairman. After you'd served your term of one or two years as president, then you became chairman. The president was a more active job. The chairman presided at meetings and so forth. Also, I served a stint in between there as campaign chairman for one year because the campaign chairman, who was Mr. James Black, had to leave San Francisco to go take a job in the East in the middle of the campaign. So I served as president.

At that time, it had just really become a five-county organization, bringing in San Mateo and Marin Counties and Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.

Int: Adrien Falk was chairman when he asked you to --

MF: He was either retiring president or chairman, I believe, and he came to see me. I recall that, because I was rather amazed or somewhat surprised that all of a sudden, out of the blue, somebody asked me to be president of the United Crusade. I thought I'd done all I ever was going to be asked to do for that over the many, many years.

The problem that was most pressing at that time was to get the five counties to work together. They each had their own individual drive, in fact.

Int: It had changed, then, from the individual to the community drive?

MF: It had changed in several degrees. The movement (you could call it the Community Chest, United Fund, United Crusade) over these thirty years or so, had changed substantially. It had included in it as participants national organizations, particularly national health organizations, like the Heart Association and the Red Cross, for example, that would never originally have really been part of it, and the many health agencies like Muscular Dystrophy -- which were national, and such organizations as the USO.

Originally it had been just those local agencies, say hospitals in San Francisco, the Boy Scouts in San Francisco, which was regional. During the wartime and soon thereafter these national organizations had had their independent drives and then were asked to come into the United Fund. So it had changed in the degree of absorbing national organizations, who got a certain amount from the community, and it had changed on a geographic basis from San Francisco to the Bay Area.

Then in San Francisco we had a Community Chest but, for example, in Alameda County -- I don't know -- they had probably five or six. They had an Oakland Community Chest and they had a Berkeley Community Chest and they had a Hayward Community Chest and a Livermore Community Chest. In these different counties, it wasn't even then consolidated on a county basis, but they pulled in and became a county organization, and as a county organization they joined with the five-county organization and it became the United Bay Area Crusade.

Int: So you found it a different organization than you left it?

MF: Yes. And it was just beginning at the time I came back to take this umbrella operation. There were still some problems about it. They had consolidated, but there were quite a few rough spots. I

MF: remember the first thing that happened soon after I became president was a series of meetings I had to have in San Mateo County, who had decided they were going to pull out and withdraw. They'd been unhappy. They'd been in it for some years and they weren't getting what they thought was their fair share of the pie and they were going to withdraw and go back to a county organization. But we smoothed it out. I've forgotten what the basis of it was, but it was a compromise really. They were happy, provided they got what they thought was their fair share of the total pie, and they measured it on the basis of what they put in by way of contributions and what they got out.

The concept of the five-county thing was that that wasn't relevant. You put in all you could put in, and you got out what you were entitled to get out. Whether a person lived in San Mateo County or San Francisco when he required services was not identifiable, and it really wasn't, because it's hard to trace whether a person -- they may live in one county and work in another. There's so much mobility in this area.

But, as you said, it was quite a different organization. It had gone from a small, local thing to regional.

Int: I've heard that you were credited with a good deal of the regional success.

MF: Well, I think that during the period that I got back there, we were smoothing off the rough edges of getting the concept on a regional basis, and San Francisco was the best organized of the five counties because we are a combined city and county. The others didn't quite see in the early days why there was anything good for them in it. They were always trying to evaluate how much money we got back into the county against what they thought they contributed, and that was an impossible thing to trace, particularly because at that time and since then a very substantial portion of the contributions were by corporations.

Take, for example, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company which operates in all these counties. They gave a contribution from their headquarters and they didn't identify it with any county -- it was for the whole operation. So you couldn't say that part of that came from San Mateo County and a certain amount came from Alameda because they didn't see it that way. They gave it out of their headquarters office.

Int: You mentioned that there had been a shift. Earlier, corporations had not given, but individuals had.

MF: It was more individuals. In fact, there was even the door-to-door solicitation, which there's not so much of now. People were solicited pretty much in their homes, either as large individual givers or small individual givers, whereas now the emphasis is that they are solicited where they work. Most of the money that is given by employees is a payroll deduction. That's become an important thing. They make their pledge where they work, and they may also give at their home. Maybe the husband gives at work and the wife gives at home, but the amount that's given from the home is a very small part of it.

The majority of the money that comes to the Crusade now is a corporate gift, which comes from the corporate treasury, and the employee campaign, which is organized within the corporation, or in the case of public agencies within the school system and others -- or the military have their campaign here. It's organized more on the basis of where you work.

Int: So there's ever so much less volunteer effort, I suppose.

MF: Well, there's less total manpower. I mean, there's not very much walking down the street, the Mothers' March or that sort of solicitation. I think the March of Dimes still does that on a limited basis.

Int: I shouldn't have said "volunteer effort," because clearly your efforts were volunteered.

MF: Well, there's a lot of volunteer effort in it, but I would say it does have more professionalism and things are done in a more professional manner. Names are put on a list by computers, and the mechanics of checking up on the donations are done through payroll deductions and things of that kind. It might be fair to say that things have become a little less personal, a little more impersonalized.

Int: That's true of all charities.

MF: That's true of them all and the charities themselves, or the organizations, are staffed by much more professional people. There still are volunteers in lots of these agencies, many of them. Take, for example, the Campfire Girls or the Girl Scouts -- the scout leaders. There are still some volunteers, but it's a more professionalized thing.

I don't believe in the early days there was such a thing as an MSW degree, master of social work. There may have been a few of

MF: them, but now it's a very large profession and a very skilled profession.

Int: More wealthy or well-to-do women did volunteer charity work earlier.

MF: Yes. There was a certain amount of the "Lady Bountiful," of taking the basket of food at Christmas or Thanksgiving to the needy family. There was more of that.

Of course, there's one major change that came along in the whole field, which was during the Depression in the '30s when the government got into welfare. That didn't exist. There wasn't any welfare. There wasn't any social security. The whole governmental process of using tax-collected funds for the support of people that had financial or social problems really arose in this country during the Depression.

We had not only the welfare, which started on a small scale at the local level and then the state level and then, finally, the national level, but then also we had this concept of the whole Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, with its elaborate schemes for not only dispensing funds, but making studies on social problems and concocting programs of manpower training, hopefully to enable people to get jobs, and the whole system of adult education and vocational training, all of which had some relation to the Department.

But I'd say prior to the '30s or the late '20s the government was really not in the business of welfare in any sense.

Int: If you were poor, you were poor.

MF: You were poor and maybe your family helped you, or maybe your neighbors helped a little bit, or maybe you just stayed poor, or the children supported the family. It was a much more informal kind of a thing.

And that has had its impact. That growth of the government in the field has had a tremendous impact on the private agencies, and they have shifted their programs from straight relief. We did have an organization in San Francisco in the early days of the Community Chest which was known as the Associated Charities. It was sort of a conglomeration, and they just gave direct relief to people. They gave them a little money, they gave them a little food, and went out and visited with the families. It was the kind of a thing that is now -- well, there are a few such agencies.

MF: The Salvation Army is one, again. They have a soup kitchen for those that are really, I'd say, at the bottom of the ladder. But there are very few private agencies that are involved in direct relief. The nature of the whole thing has changed. The government sort of takes care of that basic problem of housing and supplemental income. Private agencies are in more sophisticated areas -- in the health field, in such things as mental health and in the youth field more, not relief, but character building and prevention of delinquency.

The need is still just as great because our aspirations have been raised as to what is a good life and what people are entitled to and what they can get. So there have been those basic changes.

BAY AREA SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MF: Then my next relationship in this field came when the Bay Area Social Planning Council was founded. That resulted from a study that had been made on the Bay Area needs and a reorganization of the United Crusade, both its fund-raising activities and its planning activities. There had been a federation of planning agencies. I referred earlier to the Social Planning Council in San Francisco. Well, there were counterparts of that in the other counties, of various degrees of sophistication, and there was a sort of a federation of these various agencies.

Int: Was it United Community Funds Councils?

MF: No. United Community Funds and Councils is a national organization.

Int: Of California?

MF: Well, there was that too. That was the counterpart of the national organization, but that was more of a trade organization. It was sort of a group to coordinate the work of United Funds.

But the Bay Area Social Planning Council was formed as the result of a study whereby it was decided that the various social planning agencies which were, in all cases, I guess, somewhat similar to the San Francisco Social Planning Council, should merge as one organization with counterparts in the five counties.

Int: You were chairman of that in 1968, I see.

MF: I was the first chairman of it when this combined thing was started and I think that was earlier than '68. In December 1965 I was on a trip around the world and I was called by telephone in India. They never got me on the phone because the phone service wasn't very good and I finally sent word back to please send me a cable to tell me what it was all about. I received the cable in Afghanistan and I think that was in 1966. I wired back that I would accept, and then I got back here a few months later and found I had a new job, which was to organize this Bay Area Social Planning Council.

I'm still on the board. I served a couple of years as president and I'm now treasurer of the organization. It's had a reasonable degree of success, but we have some problems even right now. It's primarily financed by the United Crusade and it is an area-planning body which does planning for Crusade agencies and also for governmental agencies. We've done a lot of work in Alameda County and San Francisco County. We did an important study here on the reorganization of the sytem of juvenile justice in the juvenile court in San Francisco, and we've done studies for Alameda County.

The most recent thing was rather interesting. I think it was Contra Costs County, actually, that had this compiled. They had a problem over there about building a new jail and other new facilities, and they had some misgivings as to whether it was a good idea to build one large organization or several smaller ones. We were asked to make a study and made a report, and it's been accepted and they have changed their original plans.

I guess we've done a hundred different studies on various subjects for both public and private agencies.

Int: When you're asked to do a study, are you paid by the agency?

MF: Originally, we did this for free because the United Crusade supported us. We had a budget of about \$600,000 a year. But since we've been reduced to about half of that, a little more than half, we're now in the position where we have to charge a fee for services to those outside agencies. Our agreement is that we will do planning work for the Crusade as an organization and we will do work for their agencies to a certain extent and then, beyond that, we have to charge and we do charge.

Now, the job we did for the city of San Francisco on the juvenile court, we did not charge for. We probably should have, but we didn't at that time because we didn't have a system. But

MF: now we're on a fee-for-service basis with outside agencies. We still have some financial problems.

Int: Do you have a permanent staff?

MF: Yes. We have a permanent staff and then we do get consultants when we have special problems and we hire outside services sometimes, but it's a very highly professional staff and they are both specialists and generalists. There are specialists, we'll say, in the youth field and specialists in the field of the aged and other specialists in health matters. They are, I would say, highly skilled.

It has really changed substantially. It is now a professional planning organization, just as there are professional organizations that do planning in the business field and in the fiscal field. I wouldn't say we're quite like the Rand Corporation or Arthur D. Little, who would do these, but in our field of social planning it is a professional organization.

Whereas social planning in the earlier days had a slightly different concept. It was more going back to this early idea I mentioned, the Council of Social Agencies. That was a group of people in the field who got together and talked about their common problems.

This approach is to take an outside group who are not involved in any programming and, hopefully, assisting these people in the field to do a better job and giving them new types of programs. It also involves gathering the statistics on which you determine the needs and the resources. We do examine the needs in a particular field and the resources available, possibly from the outside sources of governmental funds, and then that indicates what's left and what has to be done by the private sector to avoid duplication and to avoid overlapping.

So I'm still involved in that. I'm involved only in being a member of the board and being the treasurer, having been president of it. I'm no longer connected with the United Crusade. I guess that about covers that subject.

ESTABLISHING NEEDED AGENCIES

MF: There were many other things that I was involved in this general field over the years. Oh, I got involved one time, as a result of being on this Social Planning Committee, in the early days of the concept of home care service. I remember we made a study of that. I was involved in starting a new agency here. It is now a well-accepted concept that you can take care of people after discharge from hospital or avoid hospitalization with home care services and home-making services.

Int: Was that part of one of these other agencies?

MF: Well, there was a new agency started. I was instrumental in getting the new agency started. Then we had an information and referral service for people, which was an agency which started and later went out of business. Then I was at one time involved in an agency that had something to do with the coordination of programs for the blind. I really can't remember. These were all related. I was involved in starting them, and two of them that I speak of went out of business later or merged with other organizations. The blind thing only lasted for a few years.

That was an interesting experience because it was dealing with blind people who wanted to form their own organization. Blind people want to be considered as people and not as something less than normal people. Their feeling is that most things that sighted people can do, blind people can do. In some cases, they can do them better. I think blindness for a long time was considered as a hopeless affliction. If you were blind, you were out of the mainstream of activity and the same thing is true of other so-called handicapped people, but particularly blind people. Of course, there are many brilliant professors, teachers, and, in the field of business I think there are a number who only have one problem -- they can't see. They can do everything else just as well and, in some cases, better.

This was a movement, a local organization, that wanted to get some help, not necessarily financial help. They wanted a little financial, but they wanted to be helped to persuade industry and society in general that there were many things that blind people could do, that at least they ought to be given a chance to do those things they could do.

Int: What help did you give them?

MF: Well, we formed an organization here in San Francisco, and I've really forgotten the title of it. We did contact business and industry and employer groups, asking them to at least be willing to listen to the story that the blind groups themselves had to tell. Then, as an organization, we went out of business, but I think we started some awareness by employer groups that this was something they should look into. There is now a national organization that's taken over this thing to some degree.

YOUTH PROGRAMS AND HUNTERS POINT

Int: Did all of this work in any way lead into your considerable activities with various youth projects, which I think began about 1960?

MF: Yes. Well, there was this organization known as the Committee on Youth which I headed up, and that was sort of an outgrowth of my connection with the Social Planning Committee of the United Crusade. This was a city committee in which there were representatives of both public and private agencies to deal with the problems of youth; it included such people as the chief of police, people representative of minority groups, representatives of the school system and others. It continued for a period of several years.

Int: Did it begin at a time when there was special stress, when there were special problems?

MF: Problems of youth were arising. It was really a little ahead of, let's say, the revolt of youth but there were rumblings that there were problems -- alienation of young people from the establishment. It was before the -- I guess it got up to the university level in about '64. That was the beginning of the problems over at the University of California, but this was before that.

It was a combination of, we'll say, race relation problems, in which youth were very much involved, and the school drop-out type of thing and the difficulty of youth getting employment because of, today, the sophistication of jobs. There was a time when young people got summer jobs -- it was just a very natural thing -- if they wanted them, and then there became a time when that was very difficult. It didn't automatically happen.

MF: So I would say that the need of the youth -- and there were already youth organizations. And the city itself felt that there were certain political pressures, that we'd have to do something special for youth. So we formed this Committee on Youth rather than follow a -- there was at that time a suggestion that it become a part of a city government, a department of the city.

Int: Was there a feeling of threat?

MF: Yes, there was. Some years after, we had the long, hot summers and so forth, but this was really a little before that.

I would say the principal thing we did in the early days was to form a coordinating group of various public and private organizations involved in the field of youth in San Francisco, to first get them together and see what their common problems were and to learn a little about the problems and exchange information. In that degree, it was really rather interesting because we did accomplish something in getting, for example, the Recreation Department to talk to the Police Department to talk to the School Department about their common problems, plus maybe the Boys' Club groups. They got together a little bit, instead of each sort of going on their own and deciding these problems were special. They were problems of youth, but these organizations only saw them as they came to them and they didn't see that there was an inter-connection between what happened at school and what happened in the playground after school, and what happened when they got in trouble with the police and what happened when they got into juvenile court and around the circle back again. So it was helpful.

Then, this committee sponsored this project out in Hunters Point, which was an attempt to coordinate existing agencies. Then we got this Ford Foundation grant, which resulted in the Youth Opportunity Center out there. It was a combination which was trying to bring together the different agencies working there, the School Department, the Employment Department of the State of California, the Recreation Department, the police and all the various agencies.

There was a component there which was federally supported, a program sponsored by the federal government for training -- MDTA, I think, Manpower Development Training, or something of that kind.

Int: I think in 1963 there was a government grant and also a Ford Foundation grant.

MF: Yes. Well, I guess it culminated in '63, two or three years after we started.

That program was not a great success in the sense that it did all the things it tried to do. Hunters Point at that time was sort of a hot spot in San Francisco. In fact, they did have a real riot out there. The police had to come in and quell it. But this effort out there did result in organizing the community, the people out there who were unhappy with their lot and didn't know quite what to do and were all sort of running around in different directions.

Our effort out there did bring a lot of these people together. We had meetings. There was an indigenous group, you might say, who had representatives on the Committee for Youth and we had meetings out there and worked very closely with them. They did get a feeling, I believe, that gave them, as individuals in the community, access to the city government. They had a point of contact with this committee. They could make their needs known and, to some degree, get them satisfied.

I think it accomplished a great deal in helping that community get organized. Since that time, the community is still organized in a sense. The Redevelopment Agency in San Francisco has done a great deal out there, both in tearing down old buildings and building new buildings. A good deal of that has been guided by the people out there that live there, to get what they want.

This was a period, interestingly enough, where I learned a lot and others did too about communities such as Hunters Point which really felt very strongly that they didn't want somebody from the outside to come in and tell them what was good for them. They wanted to tell the outsiders what they thought they wanted. I heard that very loud and clear, and it was the first time that I'd really ever appreciated that, because my work in this field had been a little bit -- well, you know, the experts decide what's good and then we go ahead and do it.

But there came a time, particularly in that area, when people really resented government or private agencies coming in and telling them what they wanted. They wanted to tell the outsiders what they needed.

Int: Do you feel that their claims were valid?

MF: To a great degree, yes. There was a mixture of valid and invalid. I would say some of the invalid part was that there was some of that

MF: resentment which was not really genuine, but it was politically inspired. There were people there that wanted to get political leverage. They wanted to be the leaders because they just happened to want to be the leaders. Then there were other people who didn't want any particular recognition. They just wanted to get their message across.

And I think you see that later on in the development of the whole War on Poverty, some of which was rather wasteful in that all that it did was to organize these communities on a sort of a political basis. A lot of people got jobs and there was a lot of bureaucracy set up, but the people that needed the programs weren't getting very much.

We still have some of that in the Model Cities Program, which is really now a local effort (and that hasn't been entirely successful, although it's been reasonably successful) because there always are, I would say, two types. There are the more politically motivated people who see this as an opportunity to become leaders, not necessarily with any qualifications. But when there's money around and jobs to be created, there are people that want those jobs. Then there are other people who really want the services brought to their community on the basis of their need. But maybe that's just a slice of what goes on in other communities.

Some of the housing problems have been slowed down because of the cut-back in funds for public housing or federally assisted housing, although it looks pretty good now compared to what it did earlier. Some of the new buildings out there are really very well done.

Hunters Point is interesting because it happens to be really physically and geographically one of the best parts of San Francisco.

Int: Nice weather.

MF: It's got nice weather and beautiful views. It is next to an industrial area, but it has a relatively good climate and it could be rehabilitated.

Int: It's close to Candlestick Point.

MF: It's close to Candlestick Point and close to some jobs. Now, part of the redevelopment project in that area is what's known as the Butchertown Industrial Park where the Redevelopment Agency has bought up a lot of land which was mostly occupied by automobile wreckers and

MF: very low-grade industrial sites. It's to the north of Hunters Point. I think they got title to all the land. It's to be redivided and the street patterns changed and developed as a labor-intensive industrial area to attract new industry. The Chamber of Commerce has been involved in it and the Redevelopment Agency to bring some, we'd say, light industry which will employ some of the people who need jobs in San Francisco -- not heavy industry but light industry, so-called, and, as I say, labor-intensive to the degree possible so that it'll bring jobs. Not just great big buildings with automated machinery in it but jobs for the people that live in the area and for other people that may live in San Francisco. That still hasn't been completed by any means. It's just beginning.

Int: This report on the Hunters Point-Bayview Youth Opportunities Center by Leonard Alpert --

MF: He's at State College.*

Int: -- dated February 28, 1966.** Can you describe the gist of it and what you felt was valuable and what you felt was --?

MF: Well, the concept was to not create a lot of new agencies, but to take all existing agencies that were working there in the field of education, manpower training, counselling, neighborhood organizations, and try to have one center where they'd work together. That didn't really work. I think the report sort of points it out. And it mainly didn't work because it just seemed impossible to get these various bureaucracies to work together. They were too dissimilar and they just didn't want to work together, although they said they would. When it got down to the day-to-day operation, they all had different employment practices, they had different backgrounds. It's still a nice dream that people should be able to work together even though they come from somewhat different disciplines or different backgrounds if their object is related one with the other.

*San Francisco State College, now California State University, San Francisco.

**Bernard Alpert, Organization and Administration of the Hunters Point-Bayview Youth Opportunities Center, April 1965 - January 1966; A Report to the Committee on Youth of San Francisco.

MF: We tried very hard, but it just didn't work. The people who came into this Youth Opportunity program from the Department of Education didn't get along with the people that were from the Department of Employment. Somebody had to be the boss, and there were a certain amount of rivalries and jealousies. I don't know. It didn't work.

But it did, as I said earlier, result in getting the community a little better organized. There was some spin-off and there was some increased degree of cooperation, but not to the degree that we originally thought possible.

Int: Were there some people in it who actually developed into good leaders, either from that community or elsewhere?

MF: Yes. There are still some people around who are working there in the area in the Hunters Point-Bayview Model Cities Program. There's one gentleman who was at one time the assistant director and later became director who's now a member of Congress, Mr. Ronald Dellums. It was a good stepping stone for him. He's now, as you know, one of the leading spokesman for the black legislative group in Washington. He's moved over to the East Bay. I think he learned something about community organization.

There are quite a few people there that have become, we'll say, community leaders in one way or another as a result of their training and experience in this cooperative effort.

Int: Was the project director from the Spanish-speaking community?

MF: Well, we had a series of them because the first man resigned. Then Mr. Herman Gallegos took over the job. He's still very active and quite a leader in San Francisco. He's of Mexican descent. I'm not sure whether he was born in San Francisco or not, but I've kept in touch with him. Most of the population out there were black, but it was a mixture. There was a small number of Mexican Americans, and there were also some Samoans that live in that area, and I think possibly some Philippino.

Int: You headed the Committee on Youth.

MF: Yes. That was a city-wide organization.

Int: And then you headed its steering subcommittee and subcommittee on research and statistics, and the advisory committee.

MF: I think the advisory committee probably included some of the people from the local Hunters Point community. [Phone interruption.]

Int: I suppose that the steering subcommittee was the one that was most actively concerned.

MF: I think so. Who was on that committee?

Int: Marc Johnson, who was represented by Mrs. Eloise Baubs, John R. May, of the San Francisco Foundation, Harold Spears --

MF: He was the superintendent of schools.

Int: And a Miss Kauer represented him. Miss Osceole Washington --

MF: Oh, Osceole Washington. She lives out there.

Int: And Mrs. Elouise Westbrook.

MF: Oh, Mrs. Westbrook has just become "Mrs. Hunters Point." I don't know whether you ever read in the paper, but she went back to Washington and demanded more money. She was one that I was thinking of that became a leader.

I remember the first time I ever met Mrs. Westbrook was at a meeting in the evening out there at some small place. There were problems. I mean, there had been this resentment of the people coming in from the outside. So I went out there with my wife. She sat in the back, and I sat there and got nothing but rocks thrown at me. All these people were screaming and yelling, "We don't need you. Get out of here!" and so forth. It was a little bit rough, but it was interesting.

But I remember Mrs. Westbrook, who's tremendous in size, and she was shaking her finger at me and telling me all these things. I think I replied as diplomatically as I could that I was glad to listen to what they had to say and it didn't mean I agreed with everything. But anyway, we got to be very good friends, Mrs. Westbrook and I, and also Mrs. Washington.

There were more ladies, more feminine representatives, which is rather typical, as you well know, of the Negro community, that the men just don't seem to surface very often. The women are mothers and grandmothers and they are very much interested in their community. But I think Mrs. Westbrook would admit that she got her early training in community organization as the result of being on this committee. It gave her contacts with the other parts of the community

MF: and, as I said, I think that was one of the principal things we accomplished there.

I know I made a lot of good friends. I see these ladies from time to time and I've tried to be responsive when they've asked me to do something for them over the years.

Int: Do you still maintain some contact with the group as such?

MF: No. I see them now and then and some of these people as a result of being on the Planning Commission, because they have problems that relate to the Planning Commission. Harold Brooks, who is now on the staff of, I think, the Model Cities Agency out there, was involved in this. I think he was the head of the Hunters Point Boys Club at one time on one of these subcommittees.

Really, I've forgotten all the names because six or seven years have gone by, but they're still all around, most of them.

Int: They probably are glad to have a friend on the Planning Commission.

MF: Yes, yes. We recognize each other when they show up.

EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC TELEVISION

Int: Do you want to start now with the KQED story?

MF: Yes. I think KQED is about twenty years old. I think somewhere in the early '50s this whole movement for non-commercial television, which was then called "educational television," started.

In San Francisco, I first heard about it when they were trying to get an assignment of frequency. Certain cities got them and others didn't, and they were fortunate in getting this Channel 9. I know Mr. Dan Koshland was involved in the early days.

Then they got the assignment, the frequency, which was a battle in a sense. There was some resistance by commercial stations to having these educational stations, which I don't think they saw as a great threat, but there were just so many frequencies around in each community and the commercial interests were interested in getting more of them. But anyway, this was done by an act of Congress in which the whole country was divided up and a certain

MF: percentage of frequencies were allocated to educational television.

San Francisco got started. They had a board. This was before my connection. It was primarily educators. For example, the presidents of the University of California, Stanford, San Francisco State College, USF, the Board of Education in San Francisco and Alameda County and, I think, San Mateo County. It was supposed to be educators and people from the cultural areas.

I think Grace [McCann] Morley, who was director of the San Francisco Museum, was on it, and organizations of that kind. Roy Sorenson, who was the head of the YMCA in San Francisco and quite a distinguished figure for many years before and after, was a member of it.

They started in and they got some money from the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation really was the father or the mother of this whole movement. They've put in what I think now amounts to several hundred millions of dollars, one way or another. They helped it out.

KQED had some money and they started in operation and their programs at that time were all educational, without much entertainment value. Well, originally the concept was to do programming in the schools. It's now known as instructional television. But they had a little problem in California because there was a part of the state education code which forbade any money being spent by school boards for anything except salaries of schoolteachers and other related things. So it took a couple of years before that law was changed in California. But that was their original idea, and they didn't realize at first that they couldn't do it in California.

There had been other stations. I think Pittsburgh [Pa.] was one of the first, and Boston and St. Louis and one or two other places. San Francisco was one of the first stations to get set. So they had that concept, which they weren't able to carry out initially, to just really give instructional television -- to do on television what you could do in a classroom or in the lecture hall. I've forgotten some of the earlier programs they had, probably in sewing or cooking or things of that kind.

But one of the problems that they had forgotten about was that it costs money to operate. They had this, I think, about \$100,000 or \$50,000 and they thought, "Well, boy, that's a lot of money. That'll keep us going forever." But after about a year or so's operation, or maybe even less, they suddenly discovered they were running out of money and they had no source of income.

MF: So Mr. Sorenson, who was on the board, I think was commissioned to go out and find five or six people in the business community or outside of this group to come on the board and try and solve some of their financial problems. I was one among others who joined that. Jack Mailliard was one, and a fellow from San Jose. I think there were about four or five or six. I'm the only one who's still connected with it.

So we did analyze the problem and decided that we'd have to go out and ask business and other donor groups to just put up some money for them. It was a very difficult thing because you had a highly new concept to sell. I mean, when you'd go around to talk to people in those days and talk to them about television, some of them would say, "What's educational television?" and they certainly would say, "I understand what television is, but why do you need money for it? That's a business." Then we'd explain that this wasn't a business, that this was a non-commercial operation.

Of course, now it would seem sort of ludicrous that you'd have to go around and tell people what KQED was, but in those days you certainly did.

Int: Did you have to talk to some people who were spending money also on advertising on commercial television?

MF: Well, one of the sources that we thought we could get some assistance from -- and we got a little but not too much -- was commercial television stations.

Int: Directly?

MF: Directly. We got a little help.

Int: Why did they do that?

MF: Well, they had some self-interest and some knowledge at least of what education television was. The self-interest was that if this organization failed, this channel would probably then be available for another commercial television company to come in. There were just so many channels, you see, four in San Francisco, and this would make five and somebody would come in and bid for it and get it assigned to them. If the whole thing failed nationally and there were no educational stations, these what were really rather valuable franchises would be available. So, there was a certain degree of self-interest to maintain, you might say -- a small monopoly of just four stations dividing the business instead of five. I've forgotten how many there were. I guess there were three or maybe four at that time.

MF: Later we have had help from CBS; it has been the major one. There has been recognition by commercial interests that educational television could do things that they couldn't do and in a certain degree, you might say, take the heat off them, they being criticized for not doing very good programming. They could say, "Well, we haven't got the time, but the industry, the total television thing, does have programs of greater merit." They would never put it quite in that way, but it made the whole industry look better if there was one station that was doing maybe a little better programming than the average commercial ones did.

But anyway, the president at that time was a man by the name of Vaughan Seidel who was the superintendent of schools in Alameda County. The chairman of the board, I believe, was Paul Leonard, who was the president of San Francisco State College. I just saw him recently when we had this KQED twentieth birthday party. He later went to India; he became president of the university in Beirut.

Anyway, we did have some success with raising some money from the business community. We had a meeting of the business leaders and we got some money together. We sold our story to them as to the fact that this had great potential, and I guess you might say their contribution was just on a philanthropic basis that there was a new idea and it had great potential for education and it was good for the community to have an outstanding station. There was some degree of response. It wasn't all we wanted, but it helped us over.

I became president of it, I think, a couple of years later when Mr. Seidel --

Int: 1955, I have.

MF: '55 -- I became president in '55, and Paul Leonard stayed as chairman. Then Fuller Brawner joined the group and he became the chairman after Leonard.

We started this concept of individual memberships, trying to get people to put up, I think, five dollars at that time to be a member. It's now fifteen dollars.

I was on the board for a year or two before I became the president. I succeeded Mr. Seidel, and there was an interesting little side note on that.

MF: The members of the board didn't think Mr. Seidel was doing too good a job. He was a very nice guy, terribly enthusiastic, but didn't have the, we'll say, community leadership and they thought that somebody else should do it. So, anyway, they formed a nominating committee and I was the chairman of the nominating committee.

The nominating committee started talking about who on the board we should have as president. I found myself in the embarrassing position that the members of the nominating committee said, "You should be the president." I said, "Well, how can I bring in a report as the chairman of the nominating committee nominating myself as the president?" They said, "Well, that's your problem. We nominate you."

So then I had to go and see Mr. Seidel, who was still the president, and, in a sense, ask him to resign so we could get a new president and the new president would be me. And I would say it was one of the more embarrassing moments, except that he was such a great guy. I sort of stumbled around to give this scenario and he said, "Oh, I understand just exactly. It's just great! I'm doing a very poor job. I'm terribly busy over there with running the school department and other things. I'll resign. We'll have the meeting tomorrow or the next day. I'll resign and I'll recommend that you be my successor and it'll go right through," which it did. [Laughter] But it was a little unusual. He stayed on the board. He was very helpful. He died since.

We did start this whole new concept of trying to run it like, let's say, any other kind of philanthropic or charitable organization, going out and asking for money and having this membership thing. We were very successful.

Int: Had there been any membership before?

MF: No. There had been a membership, but it didn't involve any financial -- I think it might have been a dollar or something, but it wasn't adequate. We started this membership idea and we now, today, have about, I think, 68,000 members. I remember when we first thought about getting 10,000 members, which we set up as a distant goal, and we were sort of laughed at: "You can't get people to pay for something that they can get for nothing! Why should people pay for something that they don't have to pay for?" But we apparently have sold the idea that it's worth paying for.

Int: Then the Ford Foundation --

MF: They continued to help us. They gave grants for the purchase of equipment and, over the years, grants for programming, grants for special fund-raising activities, and they still are very supportive of it.

Some considerable years later I became a member of what was then known as NET, National Educational Television, which was a national organization. There were some station-related people on it, but most of them were really not. I was one of the few. I remember there was a man from Denver who was the head of the Department of Education in Denver. He was on there and one or two others. But these were mostly people in business and industry and government who were selected by this NET.

The NET was sort of a creature of the Ford Foundation. They gave an outright grant, with which NET produced programs which were given to their affiliated stations. I think when I first went on there, there were some fifty or sixty such stations in the United States and now there's something over two hundred. Most of them are small. There are only a few that are like KQED. I mean, for example, there's one in San Jose and there's one in San Mateo that are more restricted to specifically educational elements, for instance teaching in the classroom.

Int: What was the function of the board of NET?

MF: Well, NET was really a producing organization that acquired funds from the Ford Foundation. They also got funds from other sources, from corporations, some from the government, from I believe the National Science Foundation, and other organizations.

They were an organization that was representative in a sense. They had two functions. One was to obtain money and to produce programs and to give them. Then they were distributed by being put on tape and mailed around the country, so they didn't all come at the same time. They'd produce, maybe, a certain number of copies and then they'd be mailed here and then we'd send ours to Los Angeles or Seattle. It was done by mail and the headquarters was originally in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they had this library of tapes, and then later moved to New York.

That was one function and the other was, in a sense, to be the representative of the industry in dealing in legislative matters. They had a representation in Washington because there were certain things that had to do with the assignment of frequencies. They're now out of business as an institution because we have a different structure, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which came out

MF: of legislation by the federal government.

But the study that led up to this new federal financing was the result of a Carnegie Commission report, which was headed by Dr. [James R.] Killian of MIT, who is now, I believe, the chairman of the CPB, Corporation for Public Broadcasting. They made an in-depth study of the needs, of what was needed to keep this whole movement going, because all these stations were having financial problems. They were always out rattling their tin cup and trying to raise money and never really doing it.

They determined that to do it on a proper basis there must be substantial funding from the government, something like \$100,000,000 a year they thought would be necessary over a period of years, or going up to that amount. They made some recommendations that the government set aside or find means to set aside a certain amount of money which would be available to the industry as a whole. The original recommendation, which never happened and probably never will, was that there be a certain tax put on television sets. The BBC, of course, operates that if you own a set, you have to pay a tax and that money goes into a pool. They said that was a possibility of an excise tax on the sale of new sets.

Well, this is an interesting concept, but there's only one place in the whole system that I know of where this works and that's in highway tax. That money goes automatically into a trust fund which is used for highways. But it doesn't fit in with our system of American government.

In other words, the Congress, and probably rightly, feels that if they are going to have money appropriated, they want to have something to say as to how it's going to be spent. This kind of tax really, in a sense, automatically flows in and it can only be spent for one purpose. It destroys the general budgetary process of dividing the resources and then allocating them in accordance with what the Congress thinks is necessary, and they never went for that.

There was great opposition by the television industry to having a special tax, an excise tax, on sets sold for programming. It was resisted by the manufacturers and it was certainly resisted by the commercial television. They said, 'Well, public T.V. will have all this free money to compete with us. We have to pay income taxes and our industry is regulated by the government.'

MF: So that hasn't happened. Now the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has been running along for some years on an annual appropriation from the Congress, which is now at the level of about \$40,000,000 a year and which has been of some help. The Ford Foundation, in the meanwhile, has continued to pour lots of money in to help the stations by sponsoring certain productions and in some cases giving outright grants for station operations and a great deal of money for equipment.

Twenty years ago you could equip a television station for \$100,000. Now it would cost \$1,000,000 for just a few cameras and the switching equipment because the whole thing has become much more sophisticated. In the early days, there was no such thing as videotape. Everything was live. And now you have this very sophisticated videotape and color on top of that, which is two or three times as expensive. It was an amateurish kind of a thing in the early days. Now it's highly professional and it has to have the same quality as its competitors in the commercial field to get the audience.

Int: The last KQED crisis -- did it happen just after you finished your term as chairman?

MF: Well, I finished my term as chairman just about a year ago. I was president and then became chairman because we changed the nature of those titles. We had a general manager, who was for many years Jim Day, well known, and he went on to New York. He was the general manager, and then we changed that situation whereby the general manager became the president. That was the professional. The lay leader, so called, became the chairman. So, I served as president for quite a few years and then as chairman for several years.

Int: Well, was this last crisis ...

MF: Crisis? We always have crises.

Int: Well, this last one was with Washington and was it something ...?

MF: Well, I don't think that had any specific relation or particular relation to KQED. It was relation of funding, in which there was a crisis, in a sense, between the station groups and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as to the way the money would be appropriated and how it would be divided. It has been resolved whereby there's a sort of a compromise.

MF: The stations have organized themselves into a stronger group, mainly led not by the professional managers but by chairmen of the board, the citizen participation group. They feel that they should have, and I think certainly properly, a great deal of control over what kind of programming they have and when they have it and how they have it, rather than have it sort of imposed from above from a Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is a quasi-public corporation. The members of that board are appointed by the president.

Unfortunately, they cannot help but be somewhat sensitive to the political wills and wishes of the Congress and the administration that give them their budget. This is an inherent problem, particularly in the field of public affairs programming. Nobody gets very unhappy about whether you have Arthur Fiedler's Pops or Eugene Ormandy's symphony or something, but when you get into the field of public affairs where there is continual debate and criticism of foreign policy, domestic policy and economic policy, which is bound to be critical of somebody if it's an important issue -- if it's important it's controversial, or if it's controversial it's important. It works both ways. Somebody doesn't like whatever it is, the news that you're putting out, because people really like to hear the news that they agree with and not the news they disagree with. But that's inherent in public affairs programming.

So there has been a feeling by the administration and by the Congress that they just weren't very happy about giving these people all this money and then having them come back and tell them that they weren't doing a very good job. But I think that's reasonably well resolved.

Int: I see that some things were to be cut off.

MF: There will be some. There have been some personnel changes at the Washington level and at the producing level. It's related to the total debate about the media and the political world and who likes who and who does what to whom. My own opinion is that there are no just right and wrong. I think that the media, or the press, are at times highly irresponsible. It's much more popular to be negative than positive.

And they, in turn, create a situation whereby the administration or the Congress or others feel that they're being hostile to them, and therefore they're going to get a little more hostile to them. I do believe that there's a great deal to be said on both sides. I don't think the American press is nearly as responsible as it should be. They're inclined to be sensational. The press -- and by that

MF: I mean all the media -- in most cases would rather be sensational than accurate because it sells more newspapers and, of course, it gets larger television audiences.

NEWSROOM AND OTHER KQED PROGRAMS

Int: At the time of the newspaper strike here, Newsroom got started...

MF: That was the beginning of Newsroom.

Int: Did that give the whole station a little different character, do you think?

MF: Well, that started at that time and is today and has been our largest single effort. I mean, we've put more money and resources in. That's because it is a five-day-a-week program and it's quite an expensive program. Much of the other programming we get doesn't really cost us anything. It comes via tapes and it comes out of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or other means. But local programming (and that is local programming) is rather expensive, a lot of manpower and equipment. I think it gave the station quite a lift in the field of public affairs. Some like it. Some don't like it. It's highly controversial. It was a new attempt.

It really was a first in newscasting. It was the first of its kind; it's always been and it still is unique. There is the type of news programming where somebody sits in front of a microphone and camera and reads a report that somebody else has prepared for him, but this was an attempt whereby you got the reporter who got the story to come in and then give his story on the air. You developed a really new type of personality. Some are better than others.

You have to be able to have the two skills. One is to be able to get the story and write it and the other is to present it on television, and they are quite different skills. A good writer may not be able to talk and a good talker may not be able to write. In order to do this thing well, you have to have that rather rare combination of a person who can make a good presentation before a television camera and also know what he's talking about.

The Ford Foundation have largely funded it. Now their funding is disappearing. But they also thought so well of it that they were instrumental in getting similar programs started in other cities.

MF: I don't think any of them have been very successful. San Francisco Newsroom is still by far the most successful of its type.

They started one in Washington which blew up after a while. I mean, something happened or people didn't like it and it was a failure. I'm not sure, but they've started three or four others and it hasn't worked. It's a good idea, but it's really a matter of whether you have enough talent.

Int: I notice that a number of people come on it for longer or shorter times then go on to other jobs. It must be good training.

MF: Yes. Well, one of the elements that the Ford Foundation, who were our original financial sponsor, insisted on was that it have a training component in it, that it have a training component which involved the training of minority groups, women, and young people -- I guess all minorities. I don't know why women get to be minorities when there are more of them, but anyway, that was one of the demands, that the funds given us had to include that.

So they have had, we'll say, apprentices and some of them have gotten other jobs. It has been that, you're quite right, and that continues on. We still have some new people coming in and others going out. They become newscasters or whatever they call them on other stations.

Int: Originally, the people were drawn from the newspapers.

MF: Well, I think that the nucleus of that group is still the original newspaperman -- the Examiner and Chronicle -- and most of them were experienced. Now, that won't continue forever. These people are going to get a little older and maybe get other jobs.

But I think you're right that originally they all came from newspapers. But now there is a new, we might say, skill or discipline, people who can get directly from wherever they've been, a school of journalism or whatnot, and go into this thing without having to have worked for a newspaper.

Int: Do you see any coming trend in this sort of station?

MF: Well, yes. The immediate situations that confront KQED, and to a certain degree other stations that are somewhat different than the past, is the demand by minority groups to have their point of view presented on television, which they very often see as different than the establishment method. In the first place, they feel they have different points of view. We have the language thing for one.

MF: In San Francisco, we have both the Chinese and the Spanish languages. There are a large number of people here.

So we have started a new program called "Open Studio," which encourages minority people. It's far from being successful because it has some very difficult problems. To put on a successful television program you have to have some very special skills. It isn't everybody that can do it. Even though you may be well-intentioned and you may know your subject and you may have a message that you want to give, that doesn't mean that you're able to do it.

The other side of the coin is that to have a successful station you have to have a satisfied audience. It isn't just one way. People have to receive what you're giving and they have to be enthusiastic about it to the point where they find it sufficiently interesting to watch, which means, in our case, sufficiently interesting to watch and also pay for what they watch.

So I have some misgivings about the nature of presenting this type of open access thing because I think most of it won't be very good. Not that the people involved aren't well-intentioned, but they're just not sufficiently skilled. I guess eventually we will find some method of blending the desire to present the minority point of view with the quality of the program that's necessary to attract an audience. I mean, I've watched some of these myself and I just don't think they're very good television programming.

They can't be. The three of us couldn't sit around here and all of a sudden decide we had something to say and go on television and do it. We'd have to be rehearsed. We'd have to have experience. We'd have to have controls. What you see on television, if it's good, is really a well-rehearsed thing. It isn't spontaneous very often.

Even the Watergate hearings, which is a form of television show, are rehearsed. There was an article in Time magazine. It said they have sixty-five people behind the scenes rehearsing this show which goes on every day. [Laughter]

Int: Are there any other public television trends, then, besides that one that you see?

MF: Well, that certainly is one, the desire and the demand for more minorities being presented. I also see the development of new kinds of programming that satisfy the more sophisticated demands

MF: of the public. For example, I think that more probably should be done or might be done trying to explain some of the scientific problems. Science is so much in the public domain that people are interested, but very few people can understand it.

Int: KQED used to have more science programming.

MF: Yes, yes. We had a very definite science schedule, but you might say science for the general public in I don't know what forms -- chemistry, aerospace, transportation. I think that's something that I would be interested in seeing.

Of course, there again, you have to find the people who can do it well. It's like finding a very good teacher. How many good teachers are there who can really popularize a thing without over-popularizing it? But I think it's a field that television is well suited for. I don't think people are going to sit down and read books on it. It's too complicated. But they will be interested in getting a little of this information via television, provided it's not too profound or not too dry.

And also maybe in the field of economics, which is theoretically a science, I suppose a social science, and other social sciences. I think television can do a great deal of that. But the key to it is that you cannot force things down people's throats. You have to give them something that's palatable, sufficiently entertaining, and sufficiently interesting.

They've got a choice, and if you get a little boring they're going to turn to another station. Somebody's sitting in front of the television and they want what's best. So it takes professional skill to, hopefully (although it sounds a little paternalistic) raise the level of the intelligence of the television audience -- which, of course, is almost everybody in the United States, the television audience.

The most successful thing that educational television's done, I believe, is in their programs for the young -- Sesame Street and The Electric Company (which is the second edition of it) have been very successful. But that was only done because they spent a couple of years and they had a substantial amount of money in studying what kind of a program will retain the interest of children.

In the case of Sesame Street -- and I don't know whether you're a Sesame Street fan or watch it or not --

Int: Occasionally.

MF: The way they went at it -- and I was exposed to this because it was part of the NET they were involved in -- they did a rather simple thing. When children watch television, what things do they remember best and what things are they most interested in? And they found out that the things they were most interested in were the commercials. They remembered the commercials. When mother took them to the grocery store, they said, "I want that kind of breakfast food because it's got a little toy in it or prize," and they remember these names.

So Sesame Street is really very much based on commercials, repetition, simple cartoons, flashes, and lots of repetition. It holds children's interest because it's very much based on good commercials. They're more interested in that than in the content. Then they weave a little story in there.

Int: This program Zoom --

MF: Zoom is a very good program too.

Int: The children are very creative.

MF: There children are participating. It seems spontaneous in a way, but it surely isn't and you can tell it really isn't if you know. These kids are well-rehearsed, but they're fresh and they're bright.

Well, I think that's what educational television -- Zoom I'd forgotten about, but Zoom and Sesame Street and Electric Company are very successful. Now, if we could find some way to use some of those special techniques and get at a little higher age level and still hold interest --

Int: You mentioned the economic aspects of local and nationally produced programs. Is there any formula that anyone feels should be applied to the amount of local programming or amount of local material that KQED should carry?

MF: Well, we have pressures. I mean, I wouldn't say pressures, but people have strong feelings that we should have more local programming. Personally, I think that's easier said than done because it's very difficult to keep the quality up on a local basis.

In other words, there are two hundred stations. They couldn't have two hundred Sesame Street programs, each different. None of them would be any good. They couldn't have fifty of them. You

MF: might have one for the whole United States, but to do something really well requires a tremendous resource.

I think it's a little false to talk about the differentiation between local and national because, really, there aren't that many really local things that appeal to people in the Bay Area that are so different than the same kind of thing for people in Los Angeles. There isn't that difference. I think the trend is becoming less local and more national. We're becoming more mobile. We're certainly mobile enough. In other words, all parts of the United States are getting to look more like each other, rather than the other way.

So I'm really not too sympathetic with this concept that we should have more local, because I don't really know what "local" is as distinguished from "non-local" or "regional." There are a few things -- I think that on news, people in the Bay Area are interested in what's going on right here and that, of course, can't be national. But I think they're really more interested in national affairs than they are in local affairs -- the total amount.*

*For further discussion of public television see pp. 169-172.

(Interview #6 - July 24, 1973)

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Int: Something occurred to me in connection with another subject that you have discussed: youth employment in connection with, particularly, Bayview-Hunters Point. Is the whole concept of youth employment in these years a kind of advanced babysitting?

MF: Well, I don't know whether I can exactly say that it's advanced babysitting. What you mean is that the employment for youth is more to keep youth occupied than to furnish an important part of the labor force.

Int: Yes.

MF: I think that some of that is true because the normal kind of jobs that youth used to take are really not available on the job market. I mean, they would be less skilled and apprentice type of things; and that whole concept, I think, has changed from the earlier days. The jobs are not available to young people. In other words, they're more sophisticated and take more training.

It depends how far you want to go back, but certainly in my recollection, almost any young person who was willing and healthy and able and energetic could get some kind of a job. There were those kinds of jobs. Then, from that, he would go up the ladder and maybe even become the chief executive of the corporation. I can illustrate it in the banking business.

[While the tape reel was being turned, a discussion started about apprenticeship in the printing industry.]

MF: I don't think there are any so-called entry level jobs for unskilled people in the printing industry because it's a pretty sophisticated industry and there are less people anyway. I mean, there are less

MF: jobs because it's less labor intensive, more machinery, more automatic typesetting.

In fact, actually even today, I think a lot of industries really make work, featherbedding, where you have to employ people just because that used to be the system. There's not much for them to do, but they have to be employed to watch a machine because there's always a resistance on the part of the unions to see their people displaced.

It's true on the waterfront. They have all kinds of machinery that can load and unload ships, but still they have to have the same number of people there, even though they're not doing very much, because otherwise they'd be out of work. So they've made these labor contracts which phase out.

I think the best example is in the railroad industry, where there always had to be two or three people in an engine. I guess it goes back to the fact that one of them had to shovel coal into the engine. So there was a fireman -- that's what he was called -- and an engineer. But there's no coal to be shoveled in. Most of them are run by diesel or electric and all somebody has to do is turn the valve and those things are almost all automatic. But they still have to have those two people there -- one's called an engineer and one's called a fireman -- because otherwise all these firemen would be displaced. Of course, the union put it on the basis of a safety measure that you really need two men there because one of them might drop dead or be incapacitated. But I don't know whether there's as much to that as there is to the fact that otherwise you'd replace a lot of people.

Talking about the youth thing, the young people who could get jobs -- there were perfectly legitimate jobs. I remember in the banking business, when I first went to work at the bank, we had so-called office boys who sat around and an officer would want them to run a message or to get some information. You didn't use the telephone quite that much. Sometimes you'd write a note and get the office boy to take it up the street to somebody.

A lot of these office boys, who were in high school or maybe they'd gone to college, started their training that way, and I know several in the banking business today who are pretty much the top of their profession who started in as an office boy. Then they went from that into, maybe, an assistant teller or a bookkeeper and then all the way up the line into the note department.

MF: I don't think that exists. There are no office boys anywhere. Well, there may be messenger boys, but that's even now sophisticated to the point that you have messenger services. If you want a messenger, you ring up Sparky's Messenger Service and so forth. So there are very few of those jobs available.

Int: So, in effect, it's crime prevention through employment?

MF: Yes, and it is make-work in a sense. There really aren't that many jobs, and it's too bad in a way.

Int: Did you ever find any innovative ways to --?

MF: No. Getting back to the Hunters Point thing, there was an attempt there to train these people, to get them to get some sophistication. If they wanted to get a job as a file clerk, they had to go and at least get reading and writing and some understanding of what an office procedure was or something like that.

Int: Did you feel it was successful, the effort there?

MF: Well, not very. No, I think it was unsuccessful. It wasn't very interesting kind of training, and there was a big drop-out. There were a few who were motivated and felt the importance, that it was really worthwhile staying with it, but most of them felt that they'd rather just not do it.

Actually, in the Manpower Training Program in the United States, some of which we had out there, the only way you could get these people was to pay them. You paid them to go to school. It was considered a training job and they were being paid. In other words, if they didn't get the pay, they didn't show up. But it was a way of getting some small amount. It seems unproductive to have to pay people to get training because if they don't have the desire to learn -- this sounds a little bit hard-nosed and old-fashioned -- but I think if people don't have the desire to learn, they're not going to learn just because they get paid for it. They'll go through the motions, but they really won't learn very much.

Now, that's not true of plenty of young people who really have a great desire to learn and go to school and go to college. But I think that we have a problem there. I mean, there was a time when if you didn't have the formal learning, you could go and get a job which was meaningful and somewhat interesting. You didn't have to get the formal education, and you then got into the stream of work and made associations.

MF: I think it has something to do too with the problems of youth who are sort of disconnected with the real world because they're not working. They're just in the -- what do they call it? -- youth subculture and they're sort of milling around exchanging their mutual problems and they're not integrated with older people. They feel somewhat isolated and I guess that's what's known as the generation gap.

Int: I suppose particularly the children of adults who themselves aren't working.

MF: Yes, I suppose you have this cycle of welfare, which we know goes through several generations. I think at the heart of it is the fact that we have this direction toward labor-saving machinery, automation of many things, where human labor is not really required. I think that maybe in the long run this will sort of take care of itself with everybody building labor-saving machinery. That's one theory, but I don't think it will ever quite catch up.

But there was an awful lot of work done in early days that was really almost subhuman. It really was something that humans shouldn't be engaged in. The desire to get rid of that kind of thing, like digging ditches -- it was maybe a good idea to have a mechanical ditchdigger because there's really nothing very elevating about digging a ditch.

That's come about from two desires. One is to save the cost of labor, but also to eliminate this rather subhuman character of work. Digging underground in a coal mine was certainly never a very respectable job. But you can't really eliminate those jobs and have a lot of people unemployed, and then have an increase in population. If we had a static population or a decreasing population, maybe this would take care of it, but I don't see how you can have both things going -- in other words, constant improvement of technology to eliminate unattractive jobs and still have the jobs.

That does affect youth. They're the ones that get it first.

CHOOSING TO WORK FOR PUBLIC BETTERMENT

Int: Maybe this is the place to ask a question that's occurred to me. What is it that makes someone who is not under pressure, who has relatively free will as to his pursuits, spend so much of his time and a great deal of effort on activities for the welfare of a great many people, as you do?

MF: Well, I don't know exactly. I think it's a combination of several things. One is it's the way you're brought up. You inherit, but you see around you people who are working, and children imitate their elders. Hopefully, youth imitate their elders. You sort of get into a pattern. That seems to be the thing to do. And then I think that there is this so-called work ethic, which is part of the American scheme, as opposed maybe to a European philosophy, which is that if you don't have to work, you don't work.

But I think the American scheme is that everybody should work because it's good for you. I think I personally was indoctrinated with that idea that work was good and that being occupied, having something to do, was a good thing.

That can take two forms. I don't think it means that you have to work just to be doing something, but if you're not doing something, then at least you should be using your mind in study and investigation and reading and intelligence. If you're brought up with that as an idea, it's very difficult at a certain point just to be satisfied with idleness, idleness as opposed to leisure. Leisure can mean that you don't have to be gainfully employed for the purpose of making a living, but you can be employing your mind in learning something.

At least as far as I'm concerned, everything I've done I've always felt I've learned something. It's done something to improve my mind. I've learned about people. I've learned about the world. And that, to me, is something that is an end result in itself.

Int: You could have learned in other ways that would have been less public-spirited, say.

MF: Well, it's hard to say. I think a lot of these things -- a person goes into things somewhat by plan and somewhat by accident. You find yourself in a situation. Nobody really completely plans their life. At times you do have an opportunity to plan and, in my case, I felt that I did have an opportunity to give some direction.

My several years in the military was a sort of a cut-off point where you didn't have anything to do except to spend your time and hope the war was over. But there was a lot of time to decide, and many people did. There was this sort of an expression: "When I get out of the military, I'm going to do this." Many people decided to change their vocation. That's why a lot of people settled in California.

MF: In my own case, I know I did think about it because there was lots of empty time. I wouldn't call it leisure time. There was lots of time when nothing was going on in the military. It's a twenty-four-hour day and you're detached from the real world of life and you have to be there whether you want to or not. You have an opportunity to think. I think, as far as I can recall, that I did sort of resolve that when I got out, I would get into those things that I had an interest in and pursue them rather vigorously, which was a whole variety of things, but particularly in the philanthropic and artistic world and the field of the arts and sociology and things of that kind.

So, to some degree, I did make a definite decision to do that, but a lot of the rest of it was sort of by accident. Once you make yourself available, there are plenty of people who put you to work. And I think -- it maybe sounds a little immodest -- that if you have a reasonable degree of success in doing something, then you're tabbed for something else.

KQED AND PUBLIC TELEVISION, CONTINUED

Int: We were talking earlier about KQED, and after we finished you said there were some other things that you might say about it. I think your association with it must be the longest of anyone who has known it intimately.

MF: Probably, although I feel at this particular point my interest is declining and I'll probably be sort of retiring from the scene. But I have been in some ways connected with it for most of its life -- that is, the educational, noncommercial part of it -- about eighteen years and I guess the whole thing is about twenty-five years old from its original concept.

Int: Was that pretty much the sort of thing that you resolved to do?

MF: Well, it was a very fascinating thing. I don't know whether I specially planned when I went in that I was going to stay in it for eighteen years. But it had problems. It had problems with growth and it was a changing thing and it was a very fascinating thing. I think the whole field of communications and, particularly, television is a very fascinating thing. It's still got a long way to go before it reaches its ultimate objective, whatever that may be.

MF: It was the kind of thing that was dealing with audiences. It had a financial impact which interested me -- that is, to raise enough money to keep it going -- and I think I would say that maybe I had a little more understanding of that than other things, having been trained in that world of finance. But it also was new and it was growing and it offered a lot of challenges because it had such a very large potential.

Now, I don't know how many people there are today in the United States, but I guess there are very few homes which don't have a television set or don't have one available to them. And this is pretty new. I guess it's about the newest thing we have that is universally accepted.

Harroun: It's since World War II, isn't it?

MF: It's pretty much all since World War II, yes. So, twenty-five years is pretty much the television age.

Int: And public television, as opposed to commercial television, I suppose you see as having a special role.

MF: Well, I think it has a very special role. Mechanically, it's the same. It does the same thing.

Incidentally, there was an attempt many years ago to do the same thing with radio. When radio first came on the air, there was an attempt to have noncommercial radio and commercial radio. That never really seemed to take off.

Int: KPFA.

MF: KPFA came along a little later. But now there's a great resurgence of public radio because public radio and public television are one and the same thing. This Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is a government entity -- you notice the term "broadcasting." It's not Corporation for Public Television. It's Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Now, KQED, for example, has a radio station. It's an FM station and it's small in proportion to the television. But there is a public radio network today. They have a very good public affairs program afternoons. I think it runs from 4:30 to 6:00. It's one of the best things on the air.

Int: On KQED-FM?

MF: KQED-FM.

Int: Were you instrumental in starting that?

MF: Well, that was an opportunity. I was on the board of KQED. There was such a frequency or station available. I believe it was assigned to a church or something. You see, these frequencies are assigned for commercial or noncommercial use, and this was some -- I can't remember exactly, but I think it was a church. They wanted to go out of business because they weren't making it and they sold it to us for a very small amount -- the equipment and the frequency.

There are several other community television stations that also have a radio station. For example, the KQED radio station repeats the Newroom that goes from 7:00 to 8:00. It's on radio between, I think, 10:00 and 11:00. They're doing the Watergate hearings from 7:00 a.m. on radio, and then the television has it on television in the evenings. They work together.

Int: We were discussing, in connection with KQED television, the community-inspired programs that didn't always come off. Aren't there more minority groups represented on KQED-FM?

MF: Well, actually, the KQED radio station is mainly made up, except for the news program and music programs, of ethnic programs. They have a Polish program and an Israeli program and a Chinese program and a Japanese program.

That's because it's very much easier to put together, let's say, a quasi-amateur radio program than it is a television program.

Int: Did KQED seek those, or did they --?

MF: Well, I think it was that they sought them and the groups sought the outlets and it came together. It is a national pattern, but I think maybe we have more of it here than most cities because we have more of these various ethnic groups than most cities -- maybe not the Atlantic coast. The two coastal parts of the United States have a larger proportion of ethnic minorities than most of the United States. I guess San Francisco may well have as many as any, other than New York City. I can hardly think of any racial or ethnic group that isn't represented here and has some kind of an association.

Anyway, I think I got a little off the track. I've forgotten what the principal question was. Oh, yes: Why did I see something interesting in public television? And I said that there had been

MF: this attempt to do something with radio which had largely failed. Then, when television came along, there had been some lessons learned about how to try and make it more public and less commercial. Television is so much more potent than radio. It seems to get right into people's homes.

As I said before, I think one of the most successful things -- well, one of the gaps that occurred early and continued for a long time, was that television as it was being put out was listened to by a large number of children. We have, I guess, today, in young adults -- they are a television generation. And most of it wasn't very good. There was a great deal of criticism about the type of thing that children learned on television.

So, from its earliest days, there has been an attempt by public television to do something better for children. I think they're just on the threshold of -- well, they've gone beyond the threshold. But they've had the two successful programs and they'll probably want to do more than that for young people.

Unfortunately, I don't know how many young people watch Sesame Street as compared with cartoons or science fiction that's on the other thing. But I think more and more of them are. I know in my own family -- it passed up my children, of course, but it did get to my grandchildren. And the little ones at least, even at three or four years old, they start repeating stuff that they hear on Sesame Street, counting and giving letters. They really find it very interesting.

It's fascinating though if you watch young children -- three, four, five, six, seven years old -- sitting in front of a television set. They just sit there for hour after hour, whether they know what they're watching. I mean, they're sort of hypnotized. So it's pretty important that at least some of what they see might be of some assistance to them in improving their minds and not getting them terribly emotionally upset.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

Int: Perhaps we can go on from that to other cultural things that you've participated in. The San Francisco Museum --

MF: The San Francisco Museum of Art. I can't say that that's been one of my most absorbing interests. My father was on the board, and my

MF: mother was interested in art. I think I was asked to serve on there more or less to succeed my father. These organizations are always looking for money. They live on money and, so, they like to get people that may help them raise money. So I've served on it. I think I've been on that board about twenty years, and I was president of it for a couple of years. I took my turn. And I've been treasurer. Now I'm on the board and I think I'm on the finance committee.

Int: Has it gone through certain changes?

MF: Yes. It's not a terribly old institution. The first director of it was Grace [McCann] Morley, who really did a marvelous job, and I was on the board, and I had several years of association with her. She was a remarkable woman who started this idea, here in San Francisco at least, of having a contemporary museum. I think it was due to her guidance then in many ways. She had a great eye for young artists and for contemporary artists and she was a student of art.* But she's still in the business, I believe. The last time I knew, she was in India and, I think, in charge of all their museums, the whole country. She contributed a lot. She set the standards and the groundwork, and I give her a great deal of credit.

We had some difficulties. I wouldn't say they were difficulties. She moved on to other things. Her best talents were not in the field of administration and finance and membership and all this sort of routine stuff, which doesn't have too much to do with art but is absolutely necessary in a museum because it has to have supporters. You have to have members. This, I think, really was not one of her interests.

We did have an arrangement while she was the director of the museum that she had the right to be away a good deal of the time, I think about a third at least. That was part of her professional duties, to travel, to go to art shows in other parts of the world to learn about art. So she was away.

I think both the museum and Grace Morley came to a parting of the ways** feeling that the thing had gotten too big and there was

*See: Grace L. McCann Morley, Art, Artists, Museums and the San Francisco Museum of Art, an interview by Suzanne Riess, Regional Oral History Office, 1960.

**In 1960.

MF: too much bureaucracy, or maybe the better word would be "administration," which was not her strong point.

We haven't had so many directors. She was the first one. Her successor was George Culler, and I was president during his time. He moved on to another job in Philadelphia. Then we got Jerry [Gerald] Nordland, who has just left the museum, and now they're in the process -- I believe they have engaged a director. He's either on his way up here or he'll be here by the end of the year.*

During the time that I've been connected with it, I think the museum has made a great deal of progress. I was particularly interested in one phase, which was the physical building, of trying to get additional space in that building. You may have heard something about it. That building is known as the Veterans Building -- it's now being known a little less as the Veterans Building and I hope more as the San Francisco Museum because we have our name on the front of it.

This was a sort of a continual struggle which I was involved in and there were many on the board, or some at least, who said, "Well, this place! We're stuck up on the top floor. We'll never get a decent thing. We should look for another location." Knowing the facts of the relationship between the museum and the city, which owns the building, I was always opposed to moving out because I thought moving was much too expensive and we'd never get anything as good.

So anyway, with one thing or another, we have finally gotten an agreement that the museum is entitled to more space. They've got two complete floors instead of one, and a goodly portion of the entrance lobby. So that's almost equivalent to two and a half floors. As time goes on and they can make a case that they need more space, I think they can acquire it.

And then, of course, a large amount of money was privately raised to rehabilitate the whole premises. That was after my term, but it was part of what I always looked forward to and it is, I think, today a very handsome museum. I know that during the time I was more active in it, many people from other parts of the country or other parts of the world would come for special exhibitions, curators of other museums, and they would always say, "You have the most beautiful building here. I wish we could have these high ceilings and these skylights." The modern buildings don't have these attributes. I think we in San Francisco sort of didn't -- many people

*See also pp. 378-382.

MF: didn't -- quite see the possibilities and great advantages of that building and its location, which isn't too bad.

But some people say, "Well, it ought to be downtown in Union Square." Well, if you look at most museums, they're not in the middle of the business section. The one exception maybe is the Museum of Modern Art in New York, but New York doesn't have any one section. It certainly isn't in the financial district. People, I think, if they really want to, will go a little way to see a museum rather than have it brought right to their doorstep.

Int: Is the relationship with the Opera House a good thing?

MF: Well, they're two separate buildings, but they're both under the administration of what's known as the War Memorial Trustees. These are buildings that belong to the city and they're administered by the same board of trustees, both buildings.

The Civic Center -- the number of people that live and work in that area is continually increasing. You have the Federal Building, the State Building, the library. There are a lot of people around there.

Int: The grouping, as Miss Harroun says, of the Opera House, the museum and the library seems a good idea.

MF: Yes, it's a sort of a cultural complex -- I think it's good. This is the Civic Center. It is sort of the center of San Francisco. We have several different centers. No one city can have everything in one place. Of course, there are people who think that these things should be greatly decentralized. You go out into what is known as the neighborhoods.

But if you decentralize too much and you have a whole lot of branch anythings, they're not going to be really very good. San Francisco really isn't that big that we can afford to have several little museums scattered around. We do have a system of branch libraries.

THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Int: When you were active in the library -- I suppose for many years there have been efforts to build a new building.

MF: Oh, yes.

Int: Were you for keeping the library in the Civic Center? Was that your view?

MF: Well, I wasn't on it very long, but during that time we certainly were at it. We had all kinds of plans, none of which have happened. I mean, there is not a new library, but it was mainly a matter of cost. It's a peculiar thing and most people look at that building and it looks like just a wonderful building. But inside, it is a very badly designed building for a library. The modern libraries that have been built are more or less sort of like a fairly simple warehouse building with most of the space available inside and not high courts and monumental stairways and that kind of thing. For a library, that's just wasted space. But it's imposing.

There were several plans. One was to put an addition on the back, which would be just a simple building. They own a little property in the back. I don't know really the status of it today, but eventually, I guess, they'll get another addition because the library just doesn't have enough room for all the books that you need in a modern library.

Int: I remember some suggestion that it be used as a courts building and the library be moved.

MF: Yes, but it isn't any better as a courts building than it is as a library. It's nice looking. It has a beautiful facade and it has a very imposing entrance, but it was not too well designed. It was all right for a small library. It houses a small number of books, but really not what is needed.

But I think there's a good deal more exchange. I mean, students can go to the University of California Library. It's really not that far away for people here if they really want to go, and the University has improved all of its library facilities. I don't have to tell you about that. And they've got a lot more of it.

I think we do need a bigger building or a place to house more titles in San Francisco, but I don't know whether we'll ever get it.

Int: Has anyone ever suggested simply gutting that building and building a new library inside?

MF: We went through all of that when I was involved in it and it would cost more -- the building is not earthquake proof. There are a lot of problems. You start gutting it and it'll all fall down.

In fact, one of the plans was to just gut it and build an entirely new building and put the stone back on the facade again to make it look like the same building, because it does blend in with all the other Civic Center buildings. It's the same height and it's generally the same architecture. But that was a terribly expensive concept. It got to the point where that was a possibility. Actually, we had estimates on the cost of that as against leaving it there, abandoning it, and building a new building. It was always cheaper to build a new building than to try and remodel that, a good deal cheaper.

And then there's the problem of where do you put the books while you close down the library? There's no easy solution to it.

Int: You were named to the Library Commission in 1961. You told me, but not on the tape, how you happened to be named.

MF: Well, Mayor Christopher asked me to serve and I filled out the unexpired term of somebody who had retired or resigned for some reason. I think I only served a couple of years. His successor in the office of mayor was Mayor [Jack] Shelley. What was that year you said?

Int: '61.

MF: Yes. And I guess I served a couple of years, two or three years. Anyway, Mayor Shelley was elected. To be simple, he just asked for the resignation of all the members. Some he reappointed and I was one that he didn't reappoint. He did not reappoint me. When he was elected, that was the end of my connection with the library. He reappointed some of the members and he did not reappoint me. My term ran out soon after he became mayor.

Int: I think you said you had known him when he was in labor affairs.

MF: Oh, I'd known him before that. But this was sort of a political thing. Without any disrespect to Jack Shelley, who I like, he was a very political mayor because he was a very political person. He had always been in politics, practically. He served in the state legislature and then many years in the United States Congress. So

MF: he sort of saw appointments as rewarding the faithful and keeping the party together. I don't think those kind of appointments really have very much to do with it.

My opinion is that if you serve on one of these city commissions, you're doing something for the mayor; he's not doing very much for you. There's not an awful lot of gain you can get out of being a member of the Library Commission.

Int: You're still, I think, listed as a member of the advisory council of the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library.

MF: Oh yes. That's just an association to help with the library. I'm not active in it except to pay some dues or something.

THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Int: To go back to the Civic Center, the San Francisco Symphony Association is something you've been --

MF: I guess I sort of inherited that job too from my father, second generation. Oh, I've been connected with that over quite a period of time and I've seen several conductors come and go. Pierre Monteux was the conductor, I think, at the time when I first got on. He retired and there was a long period of searching for a successor.

We had, I think, one or two years guest conductors and they were looked at and examined and there were many different opinions. Finally Mr. Jorda* was employed. Unfortunately for Mr. Jorda, who I still know and saw only a year or two ago, a close friend -- he just didn't apparently make the grade. He had difficulty communicating with the members of the orchestra and with the public. I think he was a very find young man. He maybe was not quite ready for such an important job.

Anyway, it wasn't a happy period. The attendance at the symphony went down and the musicians became dissatisfied. One of the problems that a modern symphony conductor has to deal with today, which is unfortunate, is unions, union problems. He sort of becomes a labor negotiator in a way because many of the problems that the unions have with orchestras involve the questions of auditioning new members, moving them around from the second row to the third row, and so forth. This becomes a part of a union contract now and it's very difficult for a man whose background is all in music to even get into that.

*Enrique Jorda

MF: I will say that when he was succeeded by Josef Krips, Mr. Krips had a very good grasp of how to deal with unions. He banged them on the head [laughter] in his rather Germanic or Austrian manner. It isn't quite that. He was very firm, but he also understood that he had to be practical and I think he got along fairly well with the unions. He also did a great deal for the orchestra in bringing up its quality.

Mr. Monteux had let the quality of the orchestra go down. He was old. He wasn't terribly interested in that. He was interested in his conducting and he was a master of that, one of the great ones of the world, but he was not interested (and this may have been partly his temperment and partly his age) in building the orchestra, in training new people.

Also, one of the problems that he had and Mr. Jorda had that made it somewhat difficult for them to do the things was that until about the time that Jorda came along, we didn't have a pension plan. So you really couldn't fire a poor old musician who wasn't doing a very good job, because he had no place to go. Now we have a better pension plan and a mandatory retirement and so forth so that older people can be phased out and younger people can be brought in.

The operation of the symphony has changed enormously since I've been connected with it. It had a short season; now it has -- the current thinking in most orchestras is that they're working towards -- a fifty-two-week season, where they will be paid for the whole year just like any other employee. They won't have to work half the year and then try to eke out an existence the other half.

Int: Did you participate in the selection of the present conductor?

MF: I didn't really actively participate. I was on the board and the executive committee and, I guess, was involved. I give most of the credit for Mr. [Seiji] Ozawa's selection to Mr. [Philip] Boone and Mrs. [Alexander] Albert and some others who went after him very actively, and that was a very fortunate thing for the city of San Francisco. I mean he was available and looking for a job, and San Francisco was looking for a conductor.

He had been to San Francisco many years before as a guest conductor, as a very young man. He liked San Francisco. His feeling was that it was about the right sized job for him to take in that period of his development, although he was being approached by New York and other cities. He personally felt that he would rather start his career in this country in something a little bit smaller and a little more modest because he recognized the fact that

MF: a conductor really doesn't reach his peak until he's at least, I would say, probably fifty years old. As you know, many of them go on forever and ever and ever, like Bruno Walter and Toscanini.

But there really is a reason for that. It takes a man, as a conductor, many, many years, no matter how fine a musician he is, to acquire a repertoire where he can conduct fifty, sixty, or a hundred different compositions of various kinds of music. It just takes a long time to acquire that. Of course, it might be said that's true of all musicians, but much more so of a conductor than any musicians because he has to be steeped in this history of all kinds of movements -- I mean, the classical, the contemporary, and the avant garde, if he really wants to be a conductor. It just takes an awful long time.

I think Mr. Ozawa is acquiring this, but I would say most of these men that have made great success as conductors haven't reached their full capacity until they get to be about fifty years old. It just takes about that long. If they keep their health and sanity at that time, then they become really great.

Int: What does it say about the San Francisco Symphony that we've had conductors whom we've kept till they stopped conducting?

MF: Well, we haven't had so many in the history of --

Int: Alfred Hertz.

MF: Well, Hertz was the good example. He started in and he went on and on and on. And then --

Int: Monteux.

MF: Monteux came, but Monteux was a mature man. He had maybe reached his peak before he came to San Francisco and sort of finished off his career here.

Jorda was a young man who we stayed with, and Krips had a long career behind him and is still going on because he's a very vigorous, strong man. But I don't know that there's any particular pattern.

The pattern has changed and the whole business has changed a great deal. In the first place, the length of season used to be ten weeks or fifteen weeks or maybe at most twenty weeks. Now I think we have to have covered almost thirty weeks for the whole thing.

Int: Do you expect Mr. Ozawa to stay?

MF: Well, he will certainly stay for some time, but he has now, of course, two jobs. But all these orchestras are the same. That is, there is no permanent conductor who conducts the whole season because the audience just doesn't like to hear that same man. So this whole idea of guest conducting or joint conducting is pretty much the pattern all over the United States. So we're not different in that. I mean, the New York Philharmonic or the Boston or anywhere -- Boston, for example, that's where Ozawa is. He does part of it there. They probably wouldn't want him for the whole year anyway. They'd get tired of him and he gets tired of the audience. I think it works that way. It's more that the audience gets tired of the conductor -- year after year, the same man.

If it was only, as I say, a ten-week season, why, that was something else. But when it gets to be over half a year, I think there's a necessity for that and I think it's probably good for the conductor to get a little inspiration and change of scene. At least that's the way they see it. They're all going in that direction.

Int: Do you continue to be fairly active on the symphony board?

MF: Well, I'm on the executive committee and on their investment/finance committee. That doesn't involve more than, oh, seven or eight meetings a year maybe, all together.

THE OPERA HOUSE AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS PROGRAM

Int: Does this get you into the Opera House controversy about whether to build more?

MF: About the building? Well, that's a separate thing. I was involved in it when it came up before, and I'm not really involved in it now. I might be somewhat involved in it as a member of the Planning Commission if it ever gets to that stage. The controversy is really a financial one as to whether the city should put up this million dollars a year, which they've decided to do. The balance will have to be raised privately.

I'm familiar with it; I mean, the architect. I've seen the plans and the drawings of it and my advice has been asked.

Int: Is this the projected opera house addition or the projected performing arts center?

MF: Both are part of the same plan.

Int: Are you for it?

MF: Yes, I am for it. I think this concept that you could find a better way to use the money is something that always comes up. I mean, it involves a million dollars a year out of the city treasury or general fund. It's always easy to make an argument that there's something else where you could use the million dollars better.

But if you look back and you'd always used that argument, we wouldn't have the present Opera House and we wouldn't have the present symphony because symphony orchestras need financial support, and when their funds are being raised there is always some other cause that is in competition. There was always something else that was more pressing; a lot of things that have a great degree of permanence wouldn't be here. I believe that you can't carry that argument to an extreme.

I think you have to assign some priorities, but I think, in proportion, a million dollars a year for the city of San Francisco to put up for the next -- I don't care whether it's five or ten years or twenty years -- is not out of proportion to the needs of the city. I'm not one that subscribes to the idea that it's better to spend the money in the neighborhoods' arts, because I think most of the neighborhood arts things are not very good art.

I believe art is good or bad -- well, I shouldn't say that. Maybe a better way to put it is that it's better to have high quality in smaller quantities than to spread it across the board and have sort of mediocrity in the whole field of art. I think amateur theatricals, such as I was engaged in, is a fine idea to train young people and keep them doing something, but it's a long way from Sunday artists to real art in the painting field and the same thing's true of music or theatre or opera.

Int: Perhaps the neighborhood arts program has something of that same advanced baby-sitting concept that I mentioned.

MF: I think you're quite right. You might say that out of the neighborhood arts program it's possible that there might be some real artists developed, but it's not the usual way. In order to be a



MF: good artist, you've got to go to an art school. If you want to be a musician, you go to a music conservatory, and you work at it all your life. If you want to be a ballet dancer, you spend all your life. Real art comes that way, not through just a little exposure.

I think that there's always popular art. There's rock-and-roll music and I guess that you don't have to go to a conservatory of music to do that. But maybe it would be better if they did. [Laughter] But I think the neighborhood art thing is the popular thing, and it's sort of a fine dividing line of whether you really call that art or just being involved in something that has an artistic flavor to it.

I think for the community we should have the best we can afford, some of it, that sets a standard for all the rest of the community. Unless it's really pretty good, unless it's really highly professional, it's questionable in my view as to whether you call it art.

ACT

Int: The California Theatre Foundation, ACT's organization, you've been active in from --

MF: '66. They first came out here, ACT, and they had a season down at Stanford. They played a few plays and that's where I first saw them. Stanford had this series of festivals which I think they've more or less discontinued now. At the same time while they were out here for this Stanford series, they were also doing a television production for KQED. They were doing a Shaw play. So I saw them in two different aspects.

The television thing, I remember I got involved in that because the play required a country home and a garden, so somebody at KQED asked me if I knew of any places around here, on the Peninsula or elsewhere, that would be available. Well, it so happened that I did find one and then I went over to look at it. It was near where I live in Woodside.* I also went to some of

*See also pp. 386-387.

MF: their performances at Stanford, one in particular, and I was very impressed with the quality of their work.

I hadn't been really terribly interested in repertory theatre up till that time.

Int: You hadn't been interested in Actor's Workshop?

MF: I hadn't been involved in the Actor's Workshop and, of course, I think as everybody knows, that they were out of business and ACT came. There was sort of a vacuum and I got very actively involved in helping them raise the necessary money to put their first season on.

I think for a period of about a month or so, I can't remember ever having worked any harder. I called up everybody I know and I raised personally quite a lot of money and got them enough to get started. There were some very, very dramatic moments of whether they were going to make it or whether they wouldn't make it, and we had to give them an answer in a certain length of time. I personally guaranteed the difference, after having a conference with my family, because we got a telegram from Chicago where they were: "Are we coming, or aren't we? Unless we've got a certain amount of money" (I think it was \$75,000; it wasn't there) "we have to go out of business."

So I sent them a telegram and said I would guarantee it. I had in mind where I hoped to get it and I did, but I stuck out my neck. [Laughter]

Int: Having, then, guaranteed its funding --

MF: I raised the rest of the money, from friends and others, in some fairly large amounts. I remember going after amounts of \$5,000 and \$10,000. I've forgotten the exact amount, but it was a couple of hundred thousand dollars that they needed to guarantee their opening. They always were a very expensive organization.

The first season was a great success except that they had no organization. They had no business organization. They didn't know what their budget was. They were a sort of a group that had grown up out of young people with very little organization. The first few years -- and I worked very hard on it -- was traumatic because we were always at sword's points and trying to get them to get organized and trying to raise the money. They were having these continual crises of maybe not being able to make the next week's payroll.

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MF: I spent about four years doing that and then I finally said, "I just can't take the strain any more." In the first place, it was terribly expensive because I personally very often made up the deficit. They were being financed and helped by the Ford Foundation, and I had discussions with them here and in New York. They were always on a matching basis. They would put up dollar for dollar. They set the standards pretty high, and unless we came up with our dollars they didn't come up with their dollars.

It was a very tough thing because it started from nothing. They had no audience. They had no constituency. And to start something new is very, very difficult. I don't know whether people realize the difference between starting something new and improving some existing organization. When you have nothing to go on it's very difficult. There's a lot of hard work involved.

This was new in every respect. It was new to San Francisco, this whole concept of having, at that time, two theatres, lots of theatre. They were very new. They didn't have an organization. They didn't have a business organization. They didn't have any kind of management. They now have, but it's taken about seven years. They're now in their seventh year. Well, it took five years or six years.

About the time I started getting out of active participation they were just beginning to build a proper business organization where they could make a budget at the beginning of the year of what their expenses would be, a reasonable estimate of what their income would be, and at the end of the year they'd come out right.

In the early years, their expense budget was exceeded by as much as \$100,000 and their estimate of income was too optimistic, too high. They were short. There was a gap sometimes of \$200,000 from what they thought they were going to need as subsidy and what they did need. Some way or other, we leaned on our friends and kept the thing going. But they were at the point at one time when ACT had unpaid obligations in San Francisco of \$300,000. They owed everybody -- the butcher, the baker, the candlestickmaker, printing companies, scenery manufacturers -- and they were just about to be grabbed by the sheriff and the box office to be attached and so forth.

So I would get these weekly pleas: "Well, we need another \$50,000. We need another \$100,000." So we borrowed money, and some of us involved signed personal notes. I still have some which I expect to tear up or use for wallpaper.

MF: They haven't solved all of their problems as of this date. In fact, they probably have their most serious problem right now because the Ford Foundation is no longer going to continue to finance them. No foundation goes on forever and ever, and they've been financing this organization for about eight years. So they have served notice that they will no longer finance them on the same basis. They've given them another option to give them an operating grant which gives them money at the beginning of the year, but then they have to pay it back at the end of the year. So, they have a very serious problem.

But, in the meanwhile, they have a chance. They've got a large audience and a big constituency of donors and they're known. So at least they have a fighting chance. I don't think that I would have gone out on so much of a limb, both personally and emotionally, if I didn't think that eventually they'd reach that point. Then they could stand on their own feet and the community could decide whether they wanted them or they didn't want them. But they couldn't very well decide that until they knew what it was. I personally had confidence that it was something the community would want, but I didn't think there were very many other people that did.

Now they're going to sell, I guess, over 13,000 subscriptions this year, which is almost the largest number, at a higher price. They have several thousand donors. I think the first year I raised most of this money from about twenty or thirty people. So it has moved along and they have reduced their ambitious ideas. They only operate in one theatre, with some summer stuff. They have a budget. They have reduced their expenses. They've learned how to operate a theatre.

Int: Has there been any one or any few people who have been central to its progress?

MF: Well, yes. As far as names are concerned, when I retired Alan Becker, who's a young man here, took my job as president. He worked very hard. He did some of the same crazy things I did, like loaning them money. That seems to be sort of something that one inherited. He has given quite a lot of time and effort and has sort of stepped aside. Cyril Magnin is now the president of it. They now have changed the name from California Theatre to California Friends of ACT. He's involved in some of the same problems that I was, Mr. Magnin. And Leonard Sperry, Mel Swig, and I -- there are about half a dozen people that are still on the original board.

Int: Was some of the support given by people who felt that San Francisco should continue to be a core city and that downtown should be considered --?

MF: Well, that was one of the arguments that I used without a great deal of success to corporations to get corporate giving. But there is, I think, a solid theory that if you are operating a corporation and you are employing people, many of them skilled or engineers or people like accountants, that they like to live in a community that has these things going for it, including theatre, opera, symphony, ballet. It is, I think, a valid point that these talented people that may have many job offers will be likely to go to work in the community. Of course, San Francisco has many other things to offer -- climate and many things -- but this is certainly one of the things that I think attracts lawyers, professional people, skilled people, to come and live here, which means that it is incumbent or, I think, worthwhile or there's enlightened self-interest for corporations to support these things, and they have supported them.

The difficulty here was that the answer you get on that is: "Well, yes, that's a good idea and we're supporting the opera and the symphony and the ballet and the museums. But how many more of these things do we need?" And theatre, as a subsidized thing, is really rather on a low side because most people think of theatre as purely a commercial enterprise. Either you have a show that makes money, or it folds and goes out of business. The concept of financial support or gift support for a repertory theatre is slightly different.

Nobody expects the symphony to make money on its box office, but a lot of people think that a theatre does -- and many theatres do, but not this kind of a repertory theatre which doesn't just have one play that either makes it or it doesn't make it. And the thing about ACT that has a unique quality is that it has a training program. It trains young actors to become more proficient. It trains old actors to be better.

One of Bill Ball's concepts which I think has proven itself is that his corps of actors -- he wants them to be in comedy and tragedy. To be a real actor you have to expose yourself, not just doing one little thing, which is more true with the movies where you're type cast and you're always either a hero or a villain. But to be a real actor -- it's the same principle the British stages always have, and they have produced great actors who can do any kind of acting. To be an actor you have to act whatever part is given to you.

MF: This training program and a repertory, whereby the same actor will play three different plays in a series, maybe three entirely different roles, makes him a great actor. This is an advantage and a disadvantage. Many of the fine ACT people have gone on to other things. They've gone into television. They've gone to Broadway. But newer ones have come in and taken their places.

Int: Where does Mr. Lurie stand in all this?

MF: Mr. Louis Lurie?

Int: Yes.

MF: Well, he's no longer living, you know. His son is on the board. Mr. Lurie was a very strange character. I mean, it might be the subject of a whole book that I could write about Louis Lurie. Louis Lurie was interested in the theatre in a sort of a kind of a way. He liked to associate with theatre people. He backed a few shows from time to time. He owned the Curran Theatre and operated the Geary Theatre. He never owned that; he leased that from others. And the Geary Theatre was where the ACT had its headquarters.

I must say that he gave us a little financial support, but very little. We always hoped that he would be the angel, but he never quite saw it that way. It wasn't the kind of theatre that really interested him. He was, I would say, more of a dilettante. He wasn't really interested in the theatre. It was partly a business thing and partly that he liked to be associated with actors and so forth.

Int: He had more of a commercial view?

MF: Yes. Mr. Lurie was a very successful businessman who started in, as he liked to remind the public, as a newsboy selling newspapers. He made a lot of money, but it was very difficult for him to ever let loose of any of it. He was not a philanthropist. He was a very successful businessman. He played with philanthropy in a little way, but nothing very big. He left a large amount of his estate in the form of a foundation.

His son, Robert A. Lurie, is a very fine young man and is doing a good deal of helping a lot of things that his father didn't help. Being the second generation, maybe he doesn't worry about not knowing where his next meal is coming from. I say that because there are certainly some people who have pulled themselves up by their own

MF: bootstraps and made a lot of money. During that period, there have always been crises in their financial worlds and it's very difficult for them to ever really believe that they might not need that money some day. Something is going to happen. They've lived through depressions. No matter how much money they have, they just don't believe in giving it away. I guess Mr. Getty, the richest man in the world, is a good example of that. He, I don't believe, ever gives anything to anyone, and he has stated that his contribution is to build businesses and employ people. But the idea of giving it away is just sort of foreign to his belief. And there are other very wealthy people. I would say today they are in the minority.

I don't want to do Mr. Lurie an injustice, but I knew him very well, and nobody that knew him well would say that he was a real philanthropist.

THE CALIFORNIA ARTS COMMISSION

Int: Further on your activities in the arts, in 1968, Governor Reagan appointed you to the California Arts Commission.

MF: Yes, I was on that and I found that a rather uninteresting job, or a rather frustrating job. I only stayed for a year or so. I really went on there because a very good friend of mine was the chairman of it -- Bill Sesnon, who lives in Southern California -- and he asked me if I would do it. I did it because he asked me to and then he resigned due to health problems. Then when he got off, I sort of lost interest -- I didn't think it was anything that was getting anywhere.

It may get some place. There's a new bill introduced in the legislature to give them a very substantial amount of money. But they used to meet in different parts of the state on Thursday night and Friday. Oh, we met in San Bernardino and Chico and it was always difficult for me to get there. I was always a little annoyed at the members of the commission because several times I'd suggest, "Well, why don't we meet Friday night and Saturday and then maybe go on on Sunday? Then I can give up my weekend. I don't have to cut into my Thursday and all day Friday."

Well, several of the ladies on there -- I guess I shouldn't tell this story! -- said, "Oh no! We play golf on Saturday and Sunday. We don't want to give up our weekends." But I didn't like

MF: to leave here Thursday afternoon and take up all Friday and then maybe get back on Saturday morning. So that was one of the reasons and I just didn't think they were getting anywhere.

We were sort of spinning our wheels. We had long meetings and lots of plans and ideas and I thought it was a sort of an unsatisfactory thing to be identified with, so I resigned, although I think they may get off the ground some day.

Int: I don't remember why it was started.

MF: Well, they have one in most states. New York has been very successful. At least they have a large amount of money appropriated there. They do support a lot of artistic things. They get some of their money from the National Endowment for the Arts. It gives to each state. I think each state gets about the same amount, but there has to be some kind of a state commission to take it over.

They only had -- I don't know -- \$100,000 or \$150,000 or \$200,000 maybe. For the state of California it was pretty small because about three-quarters of it was spent in staff and rent and travel and publications. So when it came to the end of the time, they had very little money to give to any artistic projects and then being the kind of a thing it was, the State Arts Commission, they had to be awfully sure that they spread the money around pretty much all over the state. Well, they spread it so thin that nothing grew, or very little grew. [Laughter]

They did put together a show which traveled around and which was for blind people. You could touch sculpture. That was a rather good thing. That wasn't originated here. It was originated back in Virginia, but they did go out and get other organizations and corporations to help this thing. And they did get together sort of a collection, a traveling show around the state, of California art which they borrowed from various museums.

They did a few things, but it really didn't seem to me anything very substantial compared to the other things I've been involved in. And the amount of time and effort -- these were monthly meetings, and committee meetings in between, and I just didn't think the time I was putting in on it was sufficiently productive, although it was interesting. I met a lot of very nice people from various parts of the state, and there was a very fine group on the commission, even though they didn't like to work on Saturday. [Laughter]

THE SAN FRANCISCO HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND HOSPITAL

Int: I have in my notes that in 1954 and after, I presume, you were on the San Francisco Health Advisory Board.

MF: Yes. I'm still on that.

Int: What is it?

MF: Well, in the charter of the city of San Francisco, it says that there should be a Health Advisory Board and the composition, I believe, is three or four doctors and one dentist and other nonprofessional people, who are supposed to advise the Director of Public Health and the chief administrative officer concerning matters that have to do with the Health Department of San Francisco. The exact language is that they are supposed to advise the Director of Public Health when he asks for advice. Sometimes we give it to him when he doesn't, but usually when he asks for it.

You're appointed by the chief administrative officer, and I think I'm now in my fourth year term. '54 -- well, it's near twenty years. And I've been the vice-chairman. We meet about six or eight times a year. We go over the budget of the Health Department.

What it really is is that the Health Department in San Francisco, as compared with several other departments, is not a commission form of department. You have a Police Commission and a Fire Commission and a Library Commission and a Planning Commission, and then there are other departments that are not commission-operated and which are under the chief administrative officer.

We have a very peculiar form of government. The chief administrative officer is something like a city manager, but he isn't. But there are certain departments which come under his direction and the Health Department is one of them.

Quite a few years ago there was a Health Commission, and the Health Department was operated by the commission. But there were a lot of abuses apparently. This is history to me. I really was not involved. The commissioners had friends who wanted to get into the hospital and they had doctors who wanted to get hospital appointments and so forth and it became a little bit of a spoils system.

So they decided they'd do away with that, and the Health Department would be run as one of the housekeeping departments.

MF: And the chief administrator has the Health Department (he appoints the Director of Public Health) just as he has the Board of Public Works or the Public Works Department. The Coroner's Office, I think, comes under him and the city architects. I've served under one, two, three, I think four different chief administrative officers. The first one was Mr. [Thomas A.] Brooks.

It's sort of interesting. I wouldn't say it's the greatest thing in the world, but it serves a fairly useful function, the times we are asked by the Director of Public Health to help him with the Board of Supervisors on this budget or to give advice on matters of accreditation. It's sort of advisory.

I don't think too much of advisory boards because one of the problems is that nobody has to follow your advice.

Int: Have you tangled with the San Francisco General Hospital situation?

MF: Oh yes. That's sort of an outgrowth. I have been on what's known as the Coordinating Council for the San Francisco Hospital to convert it to a community hospital. I've been serving on that for about two years and we've practically finished our work. I don't know whether anything will happen because this was something that the Board of Supervisors asked for due to a lot of public pressure. So they said, 'Well, we'll appoint a citizens committee.' It later became this council, and there are about twenty people on there. I'm on there as an I-don't-know-what. I'm sort of an at-large member. It's composed of various racial or ethnic groups.

It's been an interesting experience. We had a report which we furnished to the Board of Supervisors, but they haven't decided they want to do anything about it.

Int: And the report was in favor of making it a community hospital?

MF: Well, we suggested that it be a separate nonprofit corporation, that the members of its board be appointed by the Board of Supervisors, by the mayor. The situation in San Francisco is quite complicated, more complicated probably than any community in California, because we have both a city and county government. Normally a hospital is a county function -- the County Hospital in Alameda County and San Mateo. But then we have two. We have the Laguna Honda Home, which is more of a convalescent or long-term care home.

But in addition to that, the City Health Department has other functions unrelated to the hospitals, such as inspection service

MF: and disease control and emergency service. So in San Francisco, we have not only the hospital, which is usually about all they have to operate in a county, but the Department of Health has all these other functions. So the hospital has become sort of a stepchild, I think, in a way. It's always the big headache, the big problem.

Now, of course, they're building a new building which will be open in '74, and that was one of the reasons why this became an issue, that there should be some better form whereby this hospital would give, I'm going to say, quality service which is equivalent of any other private hospital. And with Medicare and Medi-Cal, that should be possible.

Anyway, this council has had many meetings. As I say, it's almost two years. It started in September. It'll be two years in September. I just went to a meeting last week at which we got some funds to carry on till the end of the year. I couldn't really say what the outcome will be. I'm not terribly optimistic that anything very good is going to happen. It's become a bit of a political football.

Int: They have a training program there, don't they?

MF: Well, the hospital is staffed by the University of California. That is, the medical service there is under the control of the University of California. It used to be a joint service. The hospital staff was divided into two parts. One was Stanford. That's when Stanford had its hospital in San Francisco. There was the Stanford service and the UC service. Stanford moved to Palo Alto, so now it is UC.

And the training that you speak of is that they have a large number of interns and residents who are medical trainees. They are at the county hospital, at San Francisco General Hospital as it's now called, and they are under the direction, more or less, of the University of California. That's another one of the elements that make it very complex because the University of California mainly sees its role there as one of a teaching institution. The patients don't always like that so much. They don't want to teach people. They want to get well. Not that the two things can't be reconciled, because most good hospitals are teaching hospitals.

But it's an outgrowth of the whole question of the charity hospital and the indigent hospital, although it's said very often that you get the best possible medical care in an institution like that because you have professors and residents and so forth. You

MF: may get the best possible medical care if you're very, very sick and you're a very interesting case, but you won't get the best treatment if you're just not very sick. The physical conditions of it are such that it's never a very attractive place, but I hope it can be made that. They're building a new building. It won't have any open wards. They'll all be double or private rooms.

So it could conceivably be a good hospital. It's important to the city of San Francisco (although some disagree with the need for it) because of its location. It's the only hospital in, I'd say, the southeast portion of San Francisco. It serves a very large area of the Mission, and the composition of the people that live in that area are of a lower economic base.

Int: Here is another subject, so far as I can tell, unrelated -- but perhaps it's not unrelated ...

MF: Everything's related one way or another. I mean, my interest in the Health Advisory Board stems from my term as the president of the board of Mount Zion where I acquired some knowledge about hospitals, and I guess I got put on this hospital council for somewhat the same reasons. I'm supposed to know something about hospitals, in other words.

Int: I should think you must by now! [Laughter]

THE INSTITUTE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH

Int: The Institute for Philosophical Research -- you were active in that?

MF: Well, that is really a one-man operation, and the one man that operates is Mortimer Adler from the University of Chicago. He was, we'll say, a contemporary of Robert Hutchins in the early days of Mr. Hutchins' reorganizing the University of Chicago.

Mr. Adler's a very close personal friend of mine. He moved out here to San Francisco with this institute, which is an institute that publishes books. He has published some books that are widely read. His most important book that's been widely read is How to Read a Book, and he's published a second edition of that.

But he moved his scene of operations out here. He had financing from a large number of foundations for this project of writing scholarly books on important subjects such as freedom, justice, law,

MF: love. It's a concept he had of collating all various ideas. He also had been involved in Encyclopedia Britannica, and with the Great Books and the Synopticon

Anyway, he moved out here to San Francisco. I guess it must be fifteen years ago or more. He conducted a Great Books course himself, which was similar to other Great Books courses except that he was probably a little better leader than most of them. My wife and I took this course for thirteen years. It's a ten-year course and we went through the first ten years and then we started again. It was sort of a select group of people that took this course. They were lawyers and professional people. It was a very fascinating course and, I must say, one of the things that had a great influence on my life. I learned to read these kind of things which I had never done very much of. I can't say I've read all of the Great Books. I have them in my library and I refer to them now and then. But that was a very interesting experience.

Mr. Adler left here some years ago and moved his headquarters back to Chicago. The institute still goes on. They're working on books on various subjects now, one on police and one on the subject of language, the deeper meanings of some of these large subjects.

Int: The institute moved with him back to Chicago?

MF: Yes. He's pretty much the institute. He's in Chicago and we have one board meeting a year. I'm the chairman because there has to be a chairman of the board, but Mr. Adler pretty much runs it all. We correspond. He sends me some of his writings, some of his lectures. He spends also a lot of his time at Aspen now. I attended one of those meetings there some years ago when he was the leader. I'd say we've been very close friends and I find it a very interesting and quite stimulating association because he's a brilliant man.

Int: Didn't the institute have a house out in Pacific Heights.

MF: First the house that the California Historical Society is in on Jackson Street, and then we lost the lease there or something and then moved down on Pacific, to the house that Mrs. Sigmund Stern, the mother of Mrs. Walter Haas, owned, and purchased that. We later sold it when the institute moved back to Chicago and the house unfortunately had been demolished. It was a rather nice old house, and they've put a rather unattractive apartment house on the lot.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Int: In our preliminary discussion you explained the Board of Regents of the University of San Francisco.

MF: Well, it's really, at the moment, in a somewhat formative stage. It's gone through a couple of different metamorphoses. It depends a little on who the president of the University is. It really is a group of businessmen whose duty mainly is in the financial world to help raise money.

Int: You were appointed in 1963. Was it through someone you knew?

MF: I really don't know who appointed me. It may have been the chairman at that time. I'm still on there and there have been, I guess, four presidents. The newest one is Father [William C.] McInnes, who just came on board this year, a very attractive young man. He is about, I know, to rejuvenate and reactivate. The board has been rather dormant for the last year or so during the term of his predecessor, Father Albert Jonsen. He didn't use the board very much and it sort of only met once or twice a year.

We have had several meetings with Father McInnes, and he wants the Board of Regents to be more active. It is a slight misnomer because it is not a Board of Regents in the sense of the University of California or of the Board of Trustees of Stanford. It's not the governing body. There also is a Board of Trustees, and the Board of Trustees until recently was composed entirely of members of the Jesuit order, but now they have included some non-Jesuits and there is supposed to be a liaison between the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees. And there actually are, I think, one or two members of the Board of Regents who also serve on the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is really the governing body and the Regents are seeking a way to be more closely connected with the governance of the University, not to be the ultimate, but to lend help, we'll say, in explaining the task of the University to the public if they need money and to be their -- whatever you want to say -- representatives with the public.*

*On September 39, 1973, it was announced that Mortimer Fleishhacker had been elected chairman of the University of San Francisco Board of Regents. See pp. 272-273.

MF: It's a very fine institution. It goes back to the early days of San Francisco. I think it's the oldest educational institution around here. It was purely, more or less, a Jesuit college, but it has expanded now to the point where it has a very important graduate department of law, and a school of nursing. It's one of the few schools of nursing left in San Francisco. They work closely with St. Mary's Hospital, which is a few blocks away. They have a night school and a liberal arts curriculum and a school of business.

Int: Have you participated in Father William J. Monihan's cultural symposia?

MF: Well, I haven't the last few years. I've been in a few of them. It just so happens they're always held in this time of the year when I live down at Woodside and I really hate to come up here on a Saturday and Sunday. I apologize. This one this year I'm sorry to miss in a way because Caspar Weinberger, who's a very close friend of mine, is going to be the main moderator or leader of it.

It's a very fine institution, Father Monihan's seminars. I enjoy them very much. I've been to a couple of them, but I'm not going this year.

POLITICS

Int: Have you been active in the Republican party in any formal way?

MF: Oh, just a little bit around the fringes. I've never been terribly interested in big politics. I've been on the group that's called the United Republican Fund, which is sort of an ongoing organization. It raises money for the state and local things, and some national. I have been involved in national politics on sort of a hit-or-miss basis. I turn it on and turn it off. I've voted for Republicans and Democrats. I would say mostly Republicans. I'm not closely identified with it. It gets too expensive. [Laughter] I just think there are better places to put one's money. I try and do my share, but I don't want to -- everything I've ever given to the party, as far as I'm concerned, they can publish it in the newspapers any day they want. I have no secrets.

I've known President Nixon. I met him first in 1948 when I did go to a Republican convention. That's a long time ago, in '48, and I happened to meet him there. I went there with a group of Californians who, believe it or not, were very much interested in

MF: the candidacy of Harold Stassen. He didn't have a campaign in California. This was the Dewey-Taft year. This was the year Mr. Truman got elected. Mr. Dewey thought he was going to be elected. It was the second time that Dewey ran.

We went on there as a sort of a voluntary group that really started in Southern California. Some friends of mine asked me, and we hoped to get sort of a boomlet started for Harold Stassen. It never got anywhere. We weren't delegates. We just went there on our own time, and we got tickets to get in from friends. But it was the only time I've been to a convention and it was quite interesting.

I did meet then-Congressman Nixon, who was in his first term in the House of Representatives, because I was with quite a group from Southern California who knew him. Then I was a little bit active when he ran for the United States Senate in San Francisco. I introduced him and got an organization going because he was completely unknown outside of Los Angeles when he ran for the United States Senate. So I was somewhat involved with that and got to know him at that time.

I remember riding around San Francisco in a station wagon and spending several days with him and his wife. I've seen them very rarely since then; occasionally. I mean, he knows who I am and I certainly know who he is, but I couldn't say we're close personal friends. But I've always contributed something to his campaign, when he ran for governor and for president a couple of times. I guess he ran three times for president. He got elected twice and defeated once. That was it. I was somewhat active in his three campaigns.

But I'm not actively and never have really been actively involved in politics. A little bit now and then at the local level for supervisors or propositions and some of that kind of thing.

(Interview #7 - August 1, 1973)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Int: I'd like to begin with a group of interests and activities of yours that have centered around the core of world peace. The first in my list is that you were a founder, or the founder, of the Inter-faith Committee for Peace in 1953. What was that?

MF: I have a vague recollection of something. I don't think it's as important as it sounds. It was something local. Yes, there were some church groups, and I think I was probably the representative in some respect of the Temple Emanu-el. I really am rather vague about that. '53. Let's see. I don't know whether that year relates to anything else.

I think we had some meetings. I remember some churches out in the Richmond district that I believe I attended. I don't know whether it was connected with the United Nations movement, or interfaith --. I think that was a sort of short-lived thing that didn't last very long, only a year or so. As I say, I have a vague recollection of having some meetings and there were representatives of various faiths. Whether they included them all or not, I don't know. Probably there'd be a Catholic and representatives of the branches of Protestantism and Judaism. I frankly don't remember what we did but get together and have some talks.

Int: I made an error there. I said that that was what I saw as your earliest interest. It wasn't really. I believe you said that you were active in the American Association for the United Nations as early as 1948 or '50.

MF: Yes. That was an organization, and it still continues as a national organization with various branches. This was an attempt that went on

MF: for many years -- as I say, it still goes on -- to popularize the United Nations, to educate young people and old people. I think there was a strong emphasis on getting United Nations material into the schools so that young people could understand what the United Nations stood for and what it was trying to do. I know that as a part of that effort there was an information center at the City of Paris department store. Do you remember that?

Int: I do remember it.

MF: Miss Lillian Philips was in charge of it, a very, very hard worker. I think it was near the book department, where they had available printed matter, brochures, pamphlets, and information about the UN. That went on for many years.

But then the other part of it was to publicize the meetings and occasionally, from time to time, people representing the United Nations would be here in the community and there would be a luncheon or dinner to expose the United Nations activities to the public. This was the story then, and I guess it's even maybe more the story now. The United Nations was publicized in the general press when they had some kind of a problem or controversy or a veto or unpleasantness, which was usually not very successful. But the work of the specialized agencies that went on then and still goes on -- the WHO [World Health Organization] and the FAO [Food and Agricultural Organization] and all the other things, the so-called specialized agencies -- was not very well known.

Int: Were you here in the city at the time of the founding of the UN?

MF: Well, at the time of the founding of the UN, I was in the Navy and I attended one or two sessions. My wife was very active in it because she was connected with the ushering and the seating of people. The Red Cross did a lot of that, and other voluntary groups. I know she was very active. She was going there every day and I used to hear a little about it from her. Of course, we heard a lot about it in the local press, and there were many famous people here, many quite outstanding people. I recall it, but I was not very much involved because I was on a day-to-day basis in the Navy and I didn't have very much time off.

I used to work days and sometimes at night, and then I'd stand watches at night once a week or so. So I didn't get very much involved.

Int: Did your interest in the United Nations, however, stem from that initial --?

MF: I think so, partly because it was started here and partly because I was asked to interest myself in the citizens' branch of it, the AAUN.* I think I was chairman of that for a year or two and there was some very interesting work. Easton Rothwell, who had been on the staff (who later became president of Mills College and now has just finished his second term as president of World Affairs Council, and is also a trustee of the Asia Foundation, a person I know well), had been on the UN, I think, staff of the founding of the UN. He remained in this area and always was a well-posted person on the affairs of the United Nations.

Then, much later on, I was asked to be the chairman of the San Francisco Citizens Committee to celebrate the twentieth anniversary. That was 1965, obviously.

Int: What was that?

MF: Well, there was a tenth anniversary celebration, then there was a twentieth, and then there was a twenty-fifth. I don't know whether there's going to be any more or not. But that was somewhat like the tenth anniversary had been. The city of San Francisco put up some money, a fairly substantial amount, and we had a several-day session out here. Those funds were used to bring a representative of each of the member nations out here and the staff of the UN, the secretariat. They held meetings in the Opera House, not really a session of the UN, but a sort of a commemorative session.

President Johnson was here for the twentieth anniversary and there were some social events, including luncheons and a banquet. My duties were more or less to arrange that. The most interesting thing about that was that the city, I think, as I remember, voted a \$300,000 budget. When we got all through, we -- the committee -- returned about \$100,000 of the amount given to us because we didn't spend it. I think that's rather unusual. Usually there's a deficit and they go back to ask for some more money.

We made up a budget of our costs, but then we were able to get private donations and donations in kind and things of that kind, so we didn't have to spend all the money. But we put on a pretty good show for what seemed like a lot of money to me at the time.

Int: Yes! [Laughter] Was that the celebration at which there were some

*American Association for the United Nations.

Int: people who wanted to get in and couldn't? There were not enough tickets or something?

MF: Oh, there was something of that kind. There was a dinner given and there were some rather unfavorable and, I think, rather unkind remarks in the press. It's a very difficult job to allocate the tickets. The dinner thing we had a little problem with because we gave the dinner in the Palace Hotel and the space was limited. There were some people that thought they should be invited who didn't get invitations.

Then there was also some problem about the allocation of tickets in the Opera House. Initially everybody wanted a lot of tickets and then, when they got the tickets, a lot of people didn't come to the meetings because they weren't all that interested. The opening session was rather interesting, the session at which President Johnson spoke.

People who thought they were entitled to blocks of tickets would ring up and say, "I want ten tickets," and then they didn't know what to do with them. Then other people were on the outside hoping to get in. I don't know that we pleased everybody, but those things are rather difficult.

Int: Who were given tickets? The AAUN people?

MF: Oh yes, everybody like that, and then the mayor had a list of people and the supervisors.

Int: Were there any available for the public?

MF: Oh yes, large numbers. A lot of people were there. And there were school children. Tickets were set aside for children.

But frankly, it was a ceremonial thing. There wasn't anything very substantive. There was a little excitement when the president spoke, and then later the representative of the Soviet government spoke and challenged the president on what he had said. But there weren't very many sparks.

Int: Did Adlai Stevenson come?

MF: Adlai Stevenson came. I got to know him well and he was a charming gentleman. He died very soon thereafter in London, within a month or two. I had a nice list of letters -- a letter from him thanking us for the hospitality and the arrangements and everything. He was

MF: the US representative and the president, as had been the custom at the tenth anniversary, also appeared because we, after all, were the host country.

It was a little political, but most of the speeches were more or less recounting the history of the UN and hoping that it would do better in the years ahead. U Thant was the Secretary General, and he spoke. It was set up very much like the UN, the same kind of thing, with blue colors and the flags. Flags were set up in the Civic Center and in the court between the Opera House and the Veterans Building, duplicating somewhat the way the flags are at the UN.

It was a nice ceremony. The purpose of the whole thing, and the one before and the one after, the twenty-fifth, was to publicize the fact that the city of San Francisco was the birthplace of the UN, and some of the speakers mentioned kindly that they'd be more happy if the UN was housed in San Francisco than New York. I don't know whether they really meant it or not, but they said it to be nice. That was sort of a theme. Some of them had been here twenty years before, one or two, who recalled the founding of it. So that was my connection.

I haven't had too much connection with the United Nations other than my early association with the AAUN and then this. But in connection with this twentieth anniversary, it was interesting because in preparing for it, we started almost a year ahead. There were a lot of logistic problems, housing and transportation. I made a couple of trips to New York and met with the UN people to arrange the program and made some very good friends on those occasions. They were nice people.

I remember a little problem. We were rather sensitive those days about the Russians, who were never very easy to get along with. Mr. Khrushchev had been attacking the United States and so had other Russian leaders. But the representative to the United Nations, in rather typical fashion, decided that he would not come out at the day he was supposed to come, when most of them came on various flights. He came a day before because he wanted to get a little more publicity some way or another.

So then there was the problem of security -- where to put him and so forth -- and there was also the question of his arrival. We had set up for the day of arrival, when all of them were coming, a very good system of people that would go down there and greet each one individually. We had the help of young people and the

MF: International Hospitality Center and other groups that were experienced in this. Each one was assigned to meet an arriving delegate, take care of their luggage, get them in a car that was arranged for them, bring them to their hotel, and get them pre-registered and so forth.

But this gentleman decided to make life difficult and came the day before when none of these arrangements were set up. So I heard about it, and we didn't know what to do. We didn't make too much of the thing. So anyway, I decided I'd drive down there and meet him personally. So I took my own car and I went down and met him and drove him to his hotel. I had a chance to talk to him, and he gave me a couple of bottles of vodka, one of which I still have. [Laughter]

The Russians had a regular thing. They had a little kit with two bottles of vodka and two little jars of caviar, which they gave to everybody. But I still have the vodka. I haven't drunk it yet. [Laughter]

Int: Either it was very good and you're saving it, or it wasn't very good.

MF: No, it was very good vodka and I've drunk about half the bottle, but I just thought I'd save the rest of it for some special occasion.

But the event was rather typical. They always tried to make things just a little difficult. Everything was arranged for everybody, but the Russians didn't feel that they should go along with everybody, that they should have some kind of a special treatment. So his system was just to arrive a day early and make it all the more difficult. We didn't have the hotel rooms reserved for the previous day. We didn't have the greeting and the reception committee arranged, but we managed to get him his room and everything.

Int: You mentioned the International Hospitality Center.. Have you been active in that?

MF: I haven't been involved in that. My wife has been involved in that. She is executive vice-president of it.* That was one of her more active things. It is an organization that cooperates with the

*See pp. 368-373.

MF: World Affairs Council and the Asia Foundation and other organizations that I have been connected with, so I'm generally familiar with it.

THE ASIA FOUNDATION AND THE IIE

Int: I think that in connection with Easton Rothwell you mentioned the Asia Foundation, and I see that you were a trustee.

MF: Yes. In '64, I think I became a trustee of it.

Int: How did you happen to become interested in that?

MF: Well, I was just asked to by Mr. [Russell] Smith, who was the chairman of the board. It was an organization founded in San Francisco and Mr. Russell Smith, who still is the chairman, was the chairman at that time and asked me to join it and I was interested.

I had been to Asia for the first time in '62.

Int: I see. Where did you go?

MF: Well, that was a trip that was arranged by the San Francisco Museum of Art. It was a special sort of a tour. It wasn't a very large group. I think there were only about fifteen or eighteen. It was an art tour, in Japan principally. The arrangements were made for us to meet the directors and to visit most of the museums in Japan, and there are many of them.

Then we went on with this group. It was sort of a conducted tour. We went on to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Thailand. Then the tour sort of broke up and people came back by different means. My wife and I went to Cambodia, Ankor Wat, and back to Saigon, to Vietnam, and then back to San Francisco.

That was the first time I'd been to Asia and then, about two years later, I was asked to join the Asia Foundation. Since then I've made three trips to Asia with the president of the Asia Foundation, Mrs. Fleishhacker and I and Mr. and Mrs. [Haydn] Williams. He's the president of the Asia Foundation. We made our last trip this year, in January and February.

Int: Were the trips more than just pleasure?

MF: Well, yes. The Asia Foundation has operations in about twelve or thirteen -- it varies from time to time -- different countries where they have a representative in each country. Our trips always involved visiting the representatives and, in addition to that, I guess all three of these trips were done coincidentally with an annual conference that the Asia Foundation has of its staff members and representatives in Hong Kong and Bangkok and other places. We usually have combined these three trips with the annual conference to meet all the representatives.

On the first one we made, which was in '65, Mr. Williams and I met with quite a few of the heads of government in some of these countries, in India and Thailand. In Taiwan, I remember, on the first trip, we met Chiang Kai-shek. The last trip we were supposed to meet his son, but we didn't. He was busy the day we were there or something. His son now has more or less taken over. He's called the Premier, but he's head of government there. Chiang Kai-shek has been mysteriously out of circulation for the last six months or so, supposedly in the hospital. I know he's in a hospital.

Int: He surely is quite old.

MF: Yes. I think he and Chairman Mao are each trying to see who's going to live longer than the other one. Probably by some strange Oriental method they'll both die on the same day, [laughter] if both or either of them are still alive at the moment. There always seems to be a little mystery. I think they are both alive, but neither of them is seen very much.

Int: Do you feel that the Asia Foundation has been an effective organization?

MF: I think it's a very effective organization and I've been very much interested in its work. It distributes between \$6,000,000 and \$8,000,000 a year in grants in Asia.

Int: What sort of thing principally?

MF: A whole variety of things. I have the annual report here. About 1,000 grants a year, many in the educational field and in, as they like to refer to it, nation building and distribution of books. They distributed over 1,000,000 books last year free of charge to libraries or schools.

They work in the field. They have general programs and some of the special programs [refers to report] -- education and national development, public administration, popular participation, communications, regional organizations, manpower development -- and then other

MF: things now in the last few years in the field of population control.

The concept is to make grants to Asian organizations and individuals, but mostly organizations, in response to their determination of their needs. That is why we have a representative in each country who works closely and become familiar with what the needs of the countries are. It can vary from \$100 to enable some scholar or some member of government to attend a conference which is not in the country budget, a regional conference or a national conference, or larger things such as assisting in the establishments of universities.

For example, in Korea they have had a plan to establish a very large national university but didn't have the talent available to help them plan a university. So we were able to obtain help for them, both in the physical field of how you plan the buildings themselves, and also how you plan the curriculum and set-up. We obtained people and sent them out there to be counsel and advisory. That's a fairly large project.

Also, to be more specific, we spent a week or so in this last trip in Vietnam. We've done a lot of work with them in their field of education. We obtained for them a man who spent some six months or so there on the concept of setting up community colleges, which is something they've done a lot of in California and it seems appropriate out there.

There's another project there that relates to revising their whole system of admission to universities, the tests they use. There in Vietnam, for example, their educational system is pretty much based on the French system, the baccalaureate and that kind of thing. They still use those terms there. But it's become somewhat outmoded in view of the new needs of people to get more technical education. So anyway, there's been a process of going through all of the systems whereby tests for advancement from various grades, particularly up to the university, are being reexamined and, hopefully, are more relevant to present day needs. It's not too different from some of the problems we have in this country about whether IQ tests and other tests are the best system. But certainly the systems they had there were very antiquated.

It was very impressive to learn the facts and figures about the amount of education that they had in Vietnam during the war. They've doubled or trebled the number of students and the number of educational institutions. Unfortunately, although they have a lot of institutions and they have a lot of students, they're not learning very much. The degree of competent faculty availability is very low.

MF: The better university professors there teach in two or three different institutions. They call them "suitcase professors." They're always traveling back and forth from one university to another.

But they have increased the amount of their education and, to some degree, the quality, even during the wartime. It's one of their great needs.

But anyway, about the Asia Foundation, I would say if you had to categorize, most of their activities are in the educational field, helping universities and so forth.

Int: When you pay visits to heads of state, is it just to acquaint them with what the Asia Foundation is doing in their countries?

MF: Well, our operations in every one of these countries as a private American organization, of course, have to be sanctioned by the country in which we're operating. We're not allowed to operate there unless we're permitted. It's not exactly a treaty, but there's a written arrangement under which we can operate and we do need -- well, we not only need, but we don't want to operate unless we're operating with the full concurrence of the government. So this is usually a ceremonial visit.

I've had more contracts with, say, ministers of education or manpower or health or things of that kind. But then sometimes as a result of that it's felt by them they'd like the representative of the Foundation to meet the head of government. And we've found in all cases that they were quite familiar with the Asia Foundation. The Asia Foundation is much better known in Asia than it is in the United States. It's rather unknown here, but it's very well known there.

Int: The men who started it --

MF: Some of the original founders of it here in San Francisco were Mr. J.D. Zellerbach and Mr. Brayton Wilbur. These are all people who have passed on, although Mr. Wilbur's son is on the board. Roger Lapham, who was the mayor of San Francisco was another of the founders.

Int: Were these people whose initial interest was Oriental trade?

MF: No, it wasn't that. It was an organization that was founded under the sponsorship of the United States government for better relations between these countries and our country to a great degree. So they

MF: were encouraged by people from the State Department and others to set up this private foundation which, although it's a private foundation, is largely financed by U.S. government funds from the State Department, AID, and other public and private funds, with the majority of it having come in the past from the public sector, although our hope was to get more and more private. As our government is phasing out its overseas aid programs, we have to balance that with private contributions.

Int: Was it particularly appropriate that it should be started in San Francisco?

MF: I think so, because we look west to the East from San Francisco and there were, probably, more ties between this coast and Japan and India and other Asian countries -- China, the Philippines -- than there were from other parts of the country. I don't know that there's a great distinction. Members of our board come from both the west coast and the east coast and some from the middle part of the United States. It is a national organization with its headquarters in San Francisco.*

Int: Another related organization -- related by subject -- is the Institute of International Education.

MF: IIE, as it's known, has its headquarters in New York and they had a chapter in San Francisco. They no longer do, but they had one for many, many years here. They concern themselves mainly with the exchange of students. That is also a quasi-government-supported organization. It has always been administering Fulbright Scholarships and others.

Their job is screening students to come to this country or assisting in that, and then also visiting foreign students who are in American campuses during the years as sort of a field operation to make sure they're okay, that they don't have problems, that they're in the right college, or that they're getting the right treatment.

That is an organization I was active in for a while.

Int: How did you happen to come to be active in that?

*For additional discussion of the Asia Foundation, see p. 214.

MF: Well really, I guess, if you want to know, the head of the local chapter was Mrs. Henry Potter Russell and she got me interested in it. She was also at one time a trustee of the Asia Foundation. She was one of the great citizens of San Francisco who did many, many, fine things, and I think she asked me if I wouldn't go on the board and then, a little later, when she wanted to relieve herself of the responsibility, asked me if I'd take it over. I was interested in foreign affairs.

The local chapter has become rather inactive. As a matter of fact, we -- that is, the San Francisco chapter -- were always trying to get something started in Los Angeles and we did get an organization going there. They've more or less taken over the west coast operation. They have a pretty big operation in Los Angeles.

Int: You were chairman of this organization?

MF: I was the chairman of the West Coast Regional Branch.

Int: And you succeeded Mrs. --

MF: I succeeded Mrs. Russell.

THE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Int: The World Affairs Council -- I know you've spent a great deal of --

MF: Well, I found, interestingly enough, that I was one of the founding members of that twenty-five years ago. I had forgotten that, but they had their twenty-fifth anniversary this year and the names of the founding members were listed.

I believe that I got first interested in that by another lady, Mrs. William Lister Rogers, who has also passed on. She was one of the organizers of that and a very, very capable woman.

Int: Is that a local organization?

MF: Yes. World Affairs Council is purely local. It's called World Affairs Council of Northern California and they have branches in Sacramento, Fresno (I'm not sure about Sacramento. I think they still have one in Sacramento), San Jose, and other places.

MF: But there are lots of different World Affairs Councils. Well, maybe not lots. There's one in Los Angeles, one in New York, one in Chicago, and other places. But each one is autonomous. They just use the same title. They have some interchange of information, but it's not a national organization.

It's primarily an educational institution. I mean, it seeks to bring information about world affairs to people that are interested. They have a young adults group and they're doing now some work in the schools. But it's mainly an adult group who are interested in the field of world affairs and who pool their resources and get information through seminars, lectures, and meetings. The high point of their activities is an annual two-day or two-and-a-half-day seminar of Asilomar. They all go down there and it's quite a large gathering. I think there must be almost twenty of those that have taken place.

Then there have been, over the years, some very important people, many men who have become Secretaries of State, ambassadors. I think President Kennedy attended one of those at one time before he was president.

Int: Have those seminars, or even just the lectures here, sometimes been used by people in high places to make announcements?

MF: Yes. One of the facets of the organization is -- either alone or now, in recent years, more in cooperation -- the sponsoring of appearances of heads of state or U.S. government people, but mostly outside people who come to this country. In other words, it is a resource that the State Department uses. If they want to have a foreign visitor appear in this area, then they turn to the World Affairs Council and say, "Well, you should organize a luncheon or dinner or something of that kind."

They've done a lot of that, including jointly with the Commonwealth Club. I recall having a dinner for Premier Khrushchev when he was here and also for General Charles de Gaulle when he was in San Francisco. The World Affairs Council was the co-sponsor of these two quite important events. Those are probably the most important ones I can think of, but they have had other people -- the head of the government of Singapore, the Japanese -- I'm not sure whether they had a Japanese premier, but foreign ministers and things of that kind.

Those are the big events that sort of stand out, but in between they have something every week, either a cocktail hour or a reception

MF: or seminar meetings. They have an ongoing program on various subjects that goes on during the year, a whole series of them.

Int: Do local members of the press sometimes participate?

MF: The press participate, and they have had people from the newspapers who have been on the board and activities. At the Asilomar seminar they usually have one or two people from the media who speak. Harrison Salisbury was there last year as one of the participants. The subject last year had to do with Asia -- Russia, China, the Asian outlook, and he had, of course, quite a background in Russian and Chinese.

Int: In your activities with the organization, have you helped set policy?

MF: Well, I think so. I was president for a couple of terms and treasurer for two years and have been on the board for -- oh, I don't know -- fifteen or twenty years, I guess.

Int: Have there been other divergent ideas about the kinds of things that should be done?

MF: Well, we've always been going through changes, trying to be responsive. It's had its high and low points. There have been times when there was a great deal of interest in foreign affairs and then times when people seem to be a little less interested. Right at the moment they're, I think, quite interested.

The membership of the organization is, I think, at pretty much a high point and there is a great deal of interest in such things as foreign trade with China. We've had members of the World Affairs Council who have been to China and come back again, and then we do call on local professors like Bob Scalapino and others. I just mention him as one of many, because in this Bay Area we have a tremendous resource of scholars and businessmen who have ties with Asia and also, to some degree, with Europe.

I've mentioned Asia because last year there's been a big emphasis. But over the years in these seminars the topics that have been chosen have been a very wide variety. We've had them on Africa. We've had them on Common Market problems, on Europe, and Asia, Latin America. We cover the whole field of foreign affairs.

The intent is that people that are interested in learning about foreign affairs and maybe, to some degree, helping or influencing

MF: American foreign policy from, let's say, the grassroots level, have to be informed. I think that this has had some effect. It is a group of people here at least who know something about foreign affairs and maybe have some influence on American foreign policy through their representatives.

Int: Do the consular representatives here often come to the meetings? Are they interested?

MF: Oh yes. They participate -- oh, depending on the part of the country. At the Asilomar conference, for example, there is usually quite a representation, and some of them have spoken. Then they participate in the ongoing week-to-week program, and the Council offers a forum for some of them to speak, some of the more prominent ones who have a message to give. I think it's a very successful organization.

Int: Yes. You say it's had periods of up and down, but it seems to me that it's been, as organizations go, unusually constant.

MF: It has. The ups and downs have been the increase and decrease in membership and the increase and decrease in their financial health. They've had deficits and not very many surpluses. They've had periods where they've overspent and had to go out and make special fund drives. I mention that because as president and treasurer and board member, I've been maybe involved in that to some degree too.

Int: Is it entirely privately financed?

MF: It's entirely privately financed, yes. Well, sometimes they get a little reimbursement from the government for putting on something. But it's usually the other way around. I think we've usually subsidized the government when they've had a job of entertaining a foreign visitor.

Int: As I remember, the dues are rather small so that ordinary --

MF: Yes. I think that \$15 are the minimum dues, but then they ask for larger amounts -- \$100, \$200, \$500. Business corporations, most of the leading banks and financial institutions, trading companies, oil companies and others, major corporations, have always been supporters of World Affairs Councils.

Int: And do their representatives come?

MF: Yes. They have a membership type of thing where the corporation membership allows, depending on its size, a certain number of

MF: assigned members, maybe three or four members of the corporation. If the corporation makes a certain contribution, they can assign people from their key departments to actually have membership.

Int: Are there other organizations or movements that you have been active in that are in this same subject area?

MF: Well, I think the Asia Foundation, the World Affairs Council, to some degree the IIE, and those we've mentioned. I can't offhand think of any others. There have been some ad hoc things from time to time, committees that I've served on that have had to do with hospitality for foreign visitors. But that's been my main activity.

I work with the Asia Foundation at the moment. It's the only one I'm active in and that's fairly time-consuming.

Int: Do you have to read a lot to keep up with that?

MF: Read a lot, keep up, yes. As a matter of fact, we present a budget every year and that is quite a document because it includes a report on each country -- a dozen or more countries -- their financial, political, and economic situation, what their needs will be for the following year. Our allocation of funds has something to do with their needs and their aspirations and the availability of funds. So it does take some background.

We have board meetings four times a year and then we have an executive committee that I serve on that usually meets in between on the other months of the year, plus certain other day-to-day things. Applications for funds or grants over a certain amount, the larger ones, are passed on by the executive committee. Smaller amounts are approved by the staff and then the total amount is included in the annual budget.

Int: Are most of the meetings held here?

MF: Of the board meetings, two are held here and two are held on the east coast, either Washington, New York, Boston, or some other city. The executive committee meetings are held in San Francisco.

CORPORATION BOARDS: INSURANCE AND RECORDING INSTRUMENTS

Int: Perhaps we should go back briefly to your activities in the business sector.

MF: Yes, I've done a little in business. [Laughter]

Int: You seem to be active on a number of boards.

MF: Well, I'm not on very many. The only two boards that I'm active on now in the business sphere are the Crocker Bank and the Natomas Company. I serve on both those boards and both executive committees.

Int: Let me just check off the ones you have served on in the past before we get to those two. Pacific Employers Insurance Company; I guess you're still --

MF: No, I resigned from that. I served about two or three years on that. That was an insurance company headquartered in Los Angeles, a subsidiary of the Insurance Company of North America. I served on that for a few years, but I found that the -- well, the necessity of going to Los Angeles. That wasn't too bad, but I didn't feel I made much of a contribution to it. So after a few years I resigned. It was very interesting work.

I had some background in the general insurance field because my father served as director for many years of the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. His brother-in-law, my uncle, was the president of that, Mr. J.B. Levison. So I had a little background in insurance and so I think I had some understanding of that job.

But over the years, over this long period we were talking about, I've been in and out of a lot of businesses in one way or another.

Int: The other one that I wanted to ask you about is the Precision Instrument Company.

MF: Well, that was a longer period because I was sort of one of the founders of that thing with the inventor, or the man who started it, Mr. Konrad Schoebel, who was a very brilliant engineer, a German boy. Well, he was a boy when he came over here soon after the war. He had invented or perfected tape recorders which were -- well, there are many other tape recorders and many other people in the field. These were certain applications that were different

MF: than anybody had made at that time and we started the company. It's still in existence and has had its ups and downs. In the last few years it's been pretty much on the downs.

But he came to me through a mutual friend and was starting the company and wanted some financial backing. So he and I were originally the sole stockholders, he being the majority stockholder and I was the minority stockholder. He put up the ideas and I put up a little money, not very much.

It got to be a pretty good-sized company for starting from nothing down the Peninsula. It's sort of typical of many companies down there in the general Stanford area. But I would say the company has not been very successful the last few years. I've retired from the scene. I got off the board some three years ago or more. I still have some stock in it.

But it was an interesting experience and they did pretty well for a while. But like many other small companies -- I think the history is sort of typical. As a small company was fairly successful, it got a little larger. It needed either a great deal more capital or a great deal more professional management, which it didn't have. It might have had the opportunity of merging with somebody else, but we didn't do that. It's going along, but I don't know whether it can ever get off the ground, frankly.

Int: Did it continue mainly in the sound field?

MF: Well, in tape recording, which is not really like the machine we're talking to. They never really got into that field. It was more as it related to scientific applications, recording data, and things of that kind. They had been working for the last several years on a very interesting concept which is one generation beyond the magnetic tape machine or device. It would actually be a thousand times more efficient, in a way, than a regular tape recorder. It used a new concept of film rather than tape, and involved in the process is the use of a laser beam. They've made one or two of these and this is probably their future, although they still make tape recorders for use in military airplanes.

As a matter of fact, going back in history, they did make some tape recorders on a fairly large order. They were used by Disneyland. The movement of the animals in Disneyland and the voices that come out of them are all done by a programmed tape recorder, and they made a portable or a reasonably small thing that was adaptable for these more complex things.

MF: They've done business with Lockheed Aviation and Boeing. These are recorders that are carried in airplanes to record all kinds of phenomena, not only sound but various temperature changes. I'm not really enough of a professional to tell you all that, but they do use these in submarines. The tape recorders that are getting most of the publicity are those that are recording conversations, but there are a lot of other things besides conversations that are recorded and kept for later replay.

Int: Like all our bank checks?

MF: Yes. Everything. The computer age does involve tape recorders.

Int: It would be interesting if things should shift back to film though.

MF: When I use the term "film," it isn't film in the normal concept that you have of taking a picture. It's a continuous strip of film something like a tape and holes are pushed through there. Everything is so small that you couldn't see it without a magnifying glass. But the laser beam which picks up impulses of sound or other things is translated -- or the impulse is translated through the laser beam and it puts small holes through the emulsion that's on the outside of this film. Then that process is reversed. It's sort of, well, maybe like a punch card thing in a sense. You take information and put it on a punch card. That punches holes. Then you take the information that comes out of those holes and print back what you put in. It's something related to that.

Int: Like a player piano. [Laughter]

MF: Yes, very much like that, only it's on a miniaturized scale. They say you get a thousand times more information on a square inch of this than you would on a normal piece of tape, so that you can get a thousand times as much information in the same space. One of the reasons this thing has some application is that there's so much information recorded on tape that it takes warehouses, and very large warehouses, to keep all this stuff. And this is a concept where you could miniaturize the whole process and have one room to store this stuff in that would be the equivalent of a thousand rooms of that size.

There's always this desire to get more efficient, and more information in less space, like where you take a picture of something and then you reduce it in size. What's it called?

Int: Micro --

MF: Microfilm. It's sort of the same kind of a concept as microfilming was for something where you take a picture. This is sort of condensed down into a very small space and there is a demand for this.

There are others in the field other than this machine I speak about. General Electric and many companies have been working on this idea of getting more efficient.

CORPORATION BOARDS: THE NATOMAS COMPANY

Int: Were you elected to the board of the Natomas Company at the time of your father's death?

MF: Yes, I think I succeeded him. He, I think, back maybe fifty years or more, had become interested. It was a gold mining company. It was originally started by British capital, and it was a placer gold mine in California -- placer gold mining, which meant using dredges.

Int: Headquarters in Marysville, was it?

MF: They had some operations up on the Feather River there, but most of theirs was on the American River near Folsom.

That was the beginning of the company, and this placer gold was the gold that was washed down in small particles, a very minute amount, and deposited. Of course, this was quite a few millions of years ago, probably from the same sources of gold that were discovered in the Sierras and the Mother Lode country. But this was further down the river, and as the gold was washed down in the water, being heavy, it was deposited like grains of sand practically. It was almost like getting one grain of sand out of a bucketful.

It was a very low-grade mining, but if you got enough of it, if you got thousands or millions of tons and you could accumulate the gold, you came up with a fair amount of gold.

But that went out of business more or less for two reasons. Interestingly enough, I guess the major one that gave it its death blow was the ecological consequences of dredging up this ground and then, when they got through dredging it, they had a bunch of cobblestones. It took all the soil and washed it away and there

MF: were county laws against doing this, because although the land they used really wasn't very good farm land -- it was a little higher than the valley and was sort of low foothill stuff -- it still made an awful mess.

You may have seen that. A lot of it has been smoothed out and has been replanted and so forth. But that was one of the problems, that they were not allowed to continue. It's sort of like strip mining is today. It's very unpopular unless you go back and put the land back in its original condition and, in doing that, raise the cost. Plus the fact that the cost of labor and materials went up and the price of gold remained fixed. It got one boost in the '30s and then it stayed at \$35 an ounce for many years. But the costs went up.

Anyway, to make a long story short, the Natomas Company owned a lot of land, which was the land they had previously used for mining, and they still operated quite a few dredges. But then they were running out of business and they merged with a company which owned 50 per cent, approximately, of the American President Lines, which had been acquired by the government and sold back. It's a complicated story. I was involved in this merger.

That put the Natomas Company, really, still with a little in the gold business, into the shipping business. The latest phase is that they are really now in the oil business. Their major source of income is a concession they got to drill oil in the off-shore area of Indonesia in the Java Sea.

Int: I'm trying to remember -- were they trying to buy a wine company?

MF: I don't know where you got all this information, but it's rather interesting. At the time that you speak of, soon after I came on the board, there was this situation that the Natomas Company either was going to go out of business because it was using up all its gold resources, or they had an opportunity to merge with somebody else, and they had a fair amount of money in the bank.

One of the first companies that we looked at by way of merger was the Gallo company. That was interesting to them because there was some relationship they had. The Natomas Company had land, and they had land, and they had a product that was making money. They were looking for a public corporation. You see, the Natomas Company had their stock listed on the New York Stock Exchange and a large number of stockholders. The Gallo company* was a family-owned company.

*The E. and J. Gallo Winery

MF: But this was a long time ago and, as far as I know, the Gallo company is just where they were. They're very, very successful. They're the largest and, I guess, most successful wine company in California, but they never have, to my knowledge, merged with anybody.

Int: Why didn't that go through?

MF: Well, that was a matter of bargaining. We thought they wanted too much for their side of the bargain and I guess they thought we were not giving enough. It was a matter of so many shares to acquire their assets. So then, about the same time or soon thereafter, this opportunity to merge with the group which was headed by Mr. Ralph K. Davies, who had this interest in the steamship business, came up. And of course, jumping forward and back, Mr. Davies' background had been in the oil business. He'd been connected with the Standard Oil Company of California and had left there to go back to Washington during the war to be the petroleum administrator.

He had a lot of connections in the oil business and people brought various things connected with it to him. So later this Indonesian thing was brought to him, and the Natomas Company went into that.

So, as of today, the Natomas Company still has a little land that they're disposing of. They're not operating any gold dredges. We did have one in Peru which we went into, and it was not too successful. That's finally been liquidated. So, they have a little land and they have about a 54 per cent or 55 percent interest, I think it is, in the American President Lines and its subsidiary, the American Mail Line, which operates out of Seattle, and the oil business. They have this oil activity in Indonesia and then a few other small interests in oil. They've been looking at other areas of the world for offshore drilling, particularly offshore because they have some competence in it.

Meanwhile, they've built up quite an organization of people that are knowledgeable in the production and the discovery of oil.

Int: Suppose the price of gold keeps going up?

MF: Yes, but we don't have any -- well, we've still got some land up there that could conceivably be -- no, it really couldn't be because we've sold all our dredges. We've gone out of the business and there's no possibility that anybody would allow you to go and dredge land up and turn it into cobblestones today.

Int: That's an interesting story.

MF: Yes, it is very interesting. The company, I think, is over a hundred years old, going way back to its early -- well, maybe not quite that much, but eighty or ninety years old. It's gone through quite a few changes, although, in a sense, it isn't such a big jump from mining for gold to mining for oil. [Laughter]

CORPORATION BOARDS: THE CROCKER NATIONAL BANK

Int: Crocker National Bank -- you have maintained --

MF: Well, the Crocker Bank, of course, is the successor bank to the Anglo Bank. I think we went into that in the early part of the story, and how I got into the banking business. Then I was out of that, and then I was asked by Mr. [W.W.] Crocker -- I've forgotten now, well over ten years ago -- to join the bank board. It was then the Crocker-Anglo Bank, and then they acquired a bank in Southern California and became the Crocker Citizens Bank. This bank in Southern California was the Citizens Bank.

Harroun: Why did they adopt that name?

MF: Well, of course, we had to use the name Crocker Citizens because the bank was unknown in Southern California by the Crocker name, but the Citizens name was known. But then, it's sort of a mouthful and we sort of phased it out and went back to the Crocker Bank. For one reason, there are an awful lot of Citizens Banks, Citizens Saving and Loan. They're all over the United States. It was a confusing term. Nobody knew whether it was a savings and loan or whether it was a bank from Texas or something of that kind.

This is something a lot of corporations have done, if you notice. Even more extreme than that is that the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey is now known as the Exxon Company. So this idea of simplifying terms for the public acceptance and identification seems to be the way things go. You lose something. You lose the association of the old name. But as far as banks are concerned, they can't keep adding on. Like the Bank of America, which was the Bank of Italy, probably consists of a hundred different individual banks. It would have been a pretty long name if they'd hooked them all together. [Laughter]

Int: The Crocker Bank, Crocker-Anglo -- Crocker National, I guess, now --

MF: Yes, now it's Crocker National.

Int: It has grown from local to state-wide, then, as you've been --

MF: Well, when the Crocker Bank and the Anglo-California Bank merged, at that point that merged bank was not a state-wide bank because they weren't in Southern California. It was Northern California. Crocker Bank was practically a one-bank operation. They had a few branches. They had a branch in Oakland and a few other little ones, but it was more of a so-called unit bank.

By merging with the Anglo-California Bank, they became, we'd say, a regional bank and then, with the acquisition of the Citizens Bank later, they became pretty much a state-wide bank. It's all the way from Los Angeles and Orange County up to Yreka. They are not in the extreme southern part of the state. San Diego County is one of the few counties they're not in at the present time.*

Int: How did they become a national bank?

MF: Well, the Crocker Bank was always a national bank and so was the Anglo-London-Paris. When it merged with the Anglo Trust Company, they absorbed the state bank. There are very few state banks of any size left in California. They're almost all national banks. There are more advantages, really, to a national charter than a state charter.

Int: Does the organization now have any special character or field of interest that differentiates it from other large banks?

MF: Not very much. I think they have some international activities. They have a bank in London. They have representatives in quite a few countries, in Brazil, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and some representation in Australia. It's mainly a California bank. I don't know whether it has any distinctive qualifications.

Its strongest base is still in the San Francisco Bay Area where it's pretty well known. It has a lot of international connections and national accounts. Both banks, when they merged -- the Crocker Bank and the Anglo -- had a lot of national accounts, so-called large insurance companies, the Metropolitan Life Insurance

*They did acquire interests in San Diego in the fall of 1973. MF

MF: Company, and business with International Tel and Tel, and, oh, most of the major corporations.

Most of these major corporations that are national have many different banking affiliations. They might have three or four in San Francisco or in California. Some of these large corporations have as many as thirty or forty banking connections in New York, Chicago, the West Coast, the Northwest, and otherwise.

Int: So far as I'm concerned, that bank has the most beautiful banking room I know.

MF: Their head office here. And that's an interesting thing, in a way, that there have been plans made and abandoned about building a new building there. One of the things that I have always, for my contributions, said: "Well, find a building, but we never should disturb that. It ought to be built around and over and not to destroy that." I think if anything is ever done -- there's nothing in the plans at the present time -- that should be done because I think people like to have some old things around to look at if they're good.

Int: It is beautiful, and there are not many left.

MF: No. The Bank of California did a very fine job; they built a new building, but they kept their old building. They kept their little building there.

Int: But they've changed the banking room there to some degree.

MF: They've made some changes. But, on the other hand, from the point of view of the observer of the scene from the outside, it looks very nice. Those banking rooms have very little utility today. They're full of empty space. But, of course, maybe that's part of the contribution --

Int: That's what's nice about them.

MF: [Laughter] It's nice. It's not terribly efficient. You don't have to have too much of that, but you should have something of that retained.

Banks and railroad stations, at the moment, are both a little anachronistic. The concept, I think, of the bank that built a fine building was to give it the impression of strength and solidity and permanence and so forth. I don't know whether people are terribly interested in that now. I mean, the average person who

MF: uses bank services, whether they give a darn about whether the bank has a good looking building. What they want is fast service and action. But I think you can have a blend of both.

I would hope that bank would never change the appearance. They might modernize. They have. They've put in new lighting. They've put in air conditioning and things of that kind, but it still has the --

Int: They've done it pretty well. They still have those velvet cushions on the seats too, I believe. [Laughter]

MF: And the arches on the outside.

Int: They have wonderful service, I think.

MF: Yes. Well, of course, banking today is a service institution. It maybe always was, but a lot more people have used banks than ever did back in the early days when not everybody had a checking account. A lot of people did their business with cash, and checking accounts were sort of rare. Not everybody had a savings account. But, I guess, today almost everybody has a checking account.

As far as the bank is concerned, it's not terribly profitable to take care of people who keep \$100 balance, but it's part of the service. So the banking business has become much more of a service business than it was, and it has changed tremendously. It's sort of a retail operation where it wasn't -- I think there was a time in my memory when most people never went into a bank and I don't think that's an exaggeration. Quite a few did, but most people hardly ever went to a bank or had anything to do with a bank.

Int: Surely women didn't.

MF: Women didn't. Somebody in the family had a bank account probably. But nowadays I guess there's hardly anybody in society that doesn't have some banking connection. They have a checking account or they have a loan or they have a consumer loan or they use a credit card or something. Almost everybody -- just like almost everybody uses the telephone -- has some contact with a bank. I can hardly think of anybody that doesn't, even if they only go in to cash a check.

Int: Yes, except the unfortunate people who live in real poverty areas who don't have, apparently, any access to banking services.

MF: Well, they probably go there to cash their welfare check at least.

Int: Probably so.

MF: And there used to be a time when people didn't have checks. If they had something, it was cash. Cash was used a great deal. I mean, within my memory -- it's not so terribly long ago -- when most payrolls were made by cash. There were little envelopes, and at the end of the week you made up the weekly payroll with envelopes of cash. Now, of course, it's never done that way.

Int: When you were working with Hunters Point, incidentally, did you come across that problem of people saying that they had no banking services and no way they could even get them?

MF: I don't particularly remember that, but I think that the banks have hesitated to extend their operation into poverty areas because they have some problems there. They have security problems.

Int: We have had experience, and I suppose everyone has, with trying to pay people who live in poverty areas, and they don't want to take checks because it's too difficult to have them cashed.

MF: Although I'm amazed, really, at the number of people that do cash checks -- every store, supermarket. There are usually people paying their supermarket bill with a check. I guess they're known, although a lot of them are not. They do have a lot of bad checks that way.

SPUR AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Int: Perhaps we could at least start today your planning activities.

MF: Well, I guess the reason the mayor selected me as a member of the Planning Commission was because I had been involved in those issues through my connection with SPUR.

Int: When did you first become interested in SPUR?

MF: Every time you ask me one of these questions I'm always very vague about dates. [Laughter] But it must be about twelve years ago or something like that. I wasn't one of the founders of it.

MF: As a matter of fact, SPUR was an organization that was an outgrowth of a very old organization. I think it was called the San Francisco Housing --

Int: San Francisco Housing and Development?

MF: No. I'm not sure whether that was it or not. Maybe it was that. But there was an old organization that had been around a long time and it got sort of dormant. Then SPUR -- San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association -- took over at about the time that the redevelopment era began here or soon thereafter.

Int: Had you been interested in this whole subject before you became involved in it?

MF: No, I don't think I was at all interested in that. I think when I got involved with SPUR it was my first experience in that field in any way, other than having had some relation to property ownership and management and real estate operations on a small scale. But I had really no understanding or background in that field at the time I became a member of SPUR and then went on the board and later became an officer of it.

Int: How did you happen to become a member?

MF: I can't recall the exact thing. I think, as I've answered several of your questions, somebody asked me and it was probably either Jerd Sullivan [Jr.] or Jack Merrill [John L. Merrill], again both of whom were friends of mine and have both passed on.

Jerd Sullivan was a former president of the Crocker Bank, as a matter of fact, a man I'd known for a long time, and Jack Merrill I'd known in college and I'd known his younger brother a little better than he. I think one or both of those fellows asked me to get interested in SPUR, and they were the chairman and president at the time I believe.

It was a good thing for the city and, I believe, somebody asked me, "Would you become interested?" and I did. It was very fascinating.

Int: When people have asked you to become interested in things, you seem to have become very much interested.

MF: Well, sometimes, depending on who it was. I think it always depends who it is and if it's somebody that you want to be associated

MF: with and who you enjoy working with. I've been asked to do a lot of things that I haven't done.

Int: You seem to put your whole interest into things you do take on.

MF: I don't like to get involved in something and just sort of be on the outskirts of it. If I get into it, I like to learn what it's all about and try and understand the thing to the point where I have some proficiency in the subject.

Of course, one thing leads to another and the more things you do, the more information you get and maybe the easier it is for you to take on something else. In a way, everything in the world is a little bit connected with something else.

Int: What was the main point of view of SPUR when you first became involved in it?

MF: Well, it was a citizens' organization and they had, and we always tried to feel we had, about 1,000 members, which was a pretty good cross-section of the city. It was largely or very substantially business-oriented, but also a bridge between, we might say, the business community and the neighborhoods, the people that were not business-connected. It was a citizens' organization that hopefully had -- and I think it still does have to a great degree -- quite a cross-section of the city.

Now, of course, no one organization can speak for everybody. Sometimes they try to, but it's not really true. But I think SPUR does bring in, distilled, the concepts and ideas of quite a broad based community.

Int: How did you get that broad base? How was that achieved?

MF: Well, it was always set up on the idea of having members, a fairly large number of members. This includes people like architects and lawyers who had some connection with the development of the city. There have always been quite a few architects and people in the design field and private planners. And then just, we'll say, housewives -- I don't like to use that word exactly -- but just individual citizens who had an interest in their neighborhood.

Part of the SPUR program has always been to work with individual neighborhoods. At one time, they had a sort of a conference of neighborhood groups and they published a directory of various

MF: neighborhood groups and identified them so they could get together, and they were brought together when they had common problems.

I think SPUR has two faces, in a sense. One is the business community who has put up most of the money to support it and, at the same time, it hasn't been a Chamber of Commerce or a downtown association type of thing where they have tried to use this organization to protect their particular interests. But they've tried to have an interchange with people who might be opposed to the downtown, to try and see where the common ground was between these two different concepts.

Now they're engaged in a very elaborate study -- I hope it's productive, but I have some misgivings -- about the whole question of growth in San Francisco. What is desirable growth? How much growth can a community tolerate? Is there a way of fixing growth? They have dealt with a lot of issues, obviously, that relate to the city like transportation and zoning matters.

One of the things that SPUR set out for itself in its earlier days was to become familiar with the activities of the City Planning Department, to support them when they thought they were right and to criticize them when they thought they were wrong, to be a sort of a citizens' lobby related to the Planning Department. The Planning Department, a department of city government, has really no constituency. Maybe it has the whole city, but no particular group that's monitoring its activities.

We talked about the library. Well, there's the Friends of the Public Library whose job it is to do something for the library. In a sense, you might say SPUR was the Friends of the Planning Department, but not necessarily their friends. They might also be their enemies. But at least they were a responsible group that would monitor and support them when they needed support and maybe point them in a different direction when they thought they were doing something wrong.

So, from that it was a rather natural thing to go into the Planning Department. The mayor asked me to serve, although it certainly could never be considered in any sense a political appointment because he and I were on different sides of the political fence.

Int: This was Mr. [Joseph L.] Alioto?

MF: Yes. So I'm in my sixth year.

Int: I think you told me a story that I thought was interesting for a variety of reasons -- that he called you on a Sunday morning and you had to consult your schedule before you could --

MF: Yes, to find out when they met and how often they met and whether I could attend the meetings, because I don't like to get involved in something unless I can be active. I have missed a few meetings, but not very many when I was in San Francisco; I think two or three.

He called me and said he wanted me to serve. He had just recently been elected mayor. In fact, he had been elected, but he was just getting around to appointing his various commissioners, which is quite a job because there are hundreds of them when you take all the various boards and commissions and appointive things.

Somebody must have suggested that I would be an appropriate person, and I did say I wasn't very keen on the idea because I really hadn't thought about it. Number one, he and I were on opposite sides of the political fence and if there was any implication that the acceptance of the appointment involved any political support, why, I didn't want to do it on that basis. He said, "No, that has nothing to do with it. You don't have to ever support me politically, and I don't expect you will unless you want to." So we had a very good understanding on that, and I admire him very much for that. Then, when he reappointed me, we had the same discussion and it was confirmed again.

It's generally assumed that if a mayor or the president or the governor appoints you to a commission, it's because he's doing you a favor because you have done him a favor. I don't quite see it that way. Maybe this is sort of a self-serving kind of a statement, but I think nobody's doing you a favor to ask you to serve on a commission. You're, in a sense, doing them a favor to work for them.

Int: Perhaps if you were a young man who wanted to run for supervisor --

MF: Yes, I suppose it gives you visibility and there is something to that. But really, if you're going to do anything, you really put a lot more in than you're going to get out on any commission. I can't see I get very much out of it. I think that's more and more the case. I think people that go into government service do make quite a contribution. I'm not talking about myself, but I mean people who take appointed jobs in Sacramento or Washington or wherever. Really, if they do a good job, they put in a lot more than they ever get out. Many of them don't have any political

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MF: ambitions at all.

I guess if you have political ambitions it's a good way to get your name known and you can then say, "Well, I served in this. That qualified me for the other." But I think that's a minority of cases. I don't think there are too many of them.

So anyway, that was about the story. I did check into the times and dates and I found they met every Thursday afternoon. I found that I didn't have anything else that conflicted with that, so I called him back that day, the day he asked me, and said I would serve. So, I've been in it ever since. That's about six years ago or six-and-a-half years ago.

GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT

Int: May I go back to SPUR before we come back up to the Planning Commission again?

MF: Yes.

Int: I have here a report called "Prologue to Action." So far as I can tell, it was put out about 1966 and it gives a number of alternate approaches to problems and solutions for, I presume, people to make up their minds which they wanted to choose. But I think it's a little bit weighted in the direction of its policy. [Laughter]

MF: A little slanted, hm?

Int: It seems to be indicating that the organization favors San Francisco becoming a central city of business and cultural activities, a core city for the area, and that it should be not restricted as to type or number of inhabitants.

MF: That was '66. If they put one out today it would look quite different. I mean, in those seven years, there's been a very substantial change, I think, in the thinking of maybe even the members of SPUR.

Int: Did you feel this way then, and do you feel another way now?

MF: I guess I felt that way then. If I was an officer of SPUR, I must have endorsed that. I still feel somewhat that way. I don't think

MF: I've made up my mind on this "no growth" thing.

Int: You were president then.

MF: Well, if I was president, it must have been right. [Laughter] But, of course, in six or seven years a lot of things have changed. The city has grown, not in population, but in building size, and certainly there has to be some limit on growth. There is even a movement that's called the "no growth" movement which is: "Stop! We just can't have one more window or building or anything." I don't think that's proper because I just have a feeling that you can't have a static situation. A city is a growing, living thing and it's always changing. If it doesn't change with the times and the demands, it's going to become an abandoned city. It's going to become a ghost town if it doesn't make some changes.

Now, the real key question is: How do you get good growth or good change? Of course, change and growth are certainly different things. But we have definitely arrived at a feeling in this country -- and it isn't only related to San Francisco -- of reversing a long trend. The country is getting to be two hundred years old and, I think, for most of those two hundred years there was a feeling that growth was inevitable and was good and there wasn't anything wrong about the degree of growth, that it automatically was a natural thing because the country's been growing for two hundred years. It's been pushing itself out. It's gotten larger.

So, whether anybody ever sat down and figured out that that was a good thing -- I don't think anybody did. I think it was just a natural thing, just like the sun comes up every morning, that everybody in America assumed that we were going to continue to grow. Now we've suddenly become aware of the fact that it can't be infinite. It can't grow forever for a variety of reasons.

There have been some pretty bad examples of uncontrolled growth which have caused the deterioration of the quality of living. And we have the same thing with the energy crisis or the crisis of raw materials. We in this country and, I think, the world as a whole are beginning to realize the problems of polluting the atmosphere and the oceans and the streams and the use of raw materials.

But maybe I'm overstressing it. I think probably that I'm overstating the case. I'm sure there was realization to some degree of this quite a long time ago, particularly, I would say, in the

MF: destruction of forests. I guess it goes back to Theodore Roosevelt. That's a long time ago, where they suddenly realized they just couldn't cut down all the trees in this country.

But that was an American phenomenon because people in other parts of the world had realized that a long time ago. All European forests are managed and there's replanting and so forth. But in this country, we thought we had such unlimited resources that we could just use them up. But suddenly we realized about lumber. But on open space and other things, I don't think we really had much of a realization or much of a program of restriction.

I went the long way around to answer the question. As of today, seven years after that, I certainly wouldn't endorse that concept. I would say something between no growth and unlimited growth. That's an easy way. It's sort of a cop-out because, you know, the truth usually lies between the extremes, and I didn't invent that idea. [Laughter] I think it's true here, but the question is: How do you do it? How do you control growth? What necessary legislation without people supporting that kind of legislation, which involves a long period of education so that the laws reflect the wishes of the majority?

I think we're going through a period now on conservation versus the growth groups where there's a lot of irrationality on both sides. I just heard a quote from Senator Goldwater who said he had resigned from the Sierra Club because he thought the Sierra Club's only interest was showing their political muscle. That's probably an extreme statement, but there's a little truth in it because my experience with the Sierra Club in the last few years is that it has gotten a long way away from what the Sierra Club was founded for.

It's gotten to be a sort of a "no growth" organization and they're pretty much against everything. I suppose there has to be somebody like that around who takes the extreme point of view.

Int: I've heard SPUR referred to as a rather conservative organization.

MF: Well, I think they're conservative. They try to be in the middle between the extremes. At least, if they do their job according to their charter, they don't take positions without a fair amount of study to try and get a synthesis of various views. From time to time, they may zig and zag a little bit and be a little extreme and a little too conservative, but I think their purpose is to not take a position based on emotion or on a one-line thing.

MF: Each individual subject they take up, they go into in considerable depth to try and get the facts and come up with a reasoned and practical solution to whatever the problem may be.

They just recently supported the Municipal Railway in San Francisco -- a very, very strong support. The Municipal Railway is a necessary thing. It should get a full budget. People keep saying we have bad service, which is true, but the examination as to the reason they have bad service, they never had enough money to do the things they're supposed to do, new equipment, enough personnel, and so forth. So, on that kind of thing, that was an excellent study and it had quite an effect. As a matter of fact, the Board of Supervisors, I think largely as a result of that, passed practically all the money they asked for.

Their point was it may be wasteful, but at least give them one year to operate on what they say they need and see what they do with it. Now, if they don't do anything with it and just waste the money, why then you take another look. But you'll never find out whether it's a good system or not unless they have enough money to operate it with.

Int: You mentioned the Downtown Association. I should think that would be a position taken by the Downtown Association, but I don't think it is necessarily, is it?

MF: No, I think that the Downtown Association is a little on the conservative side. That, of course, means, when you say, "Give Muni Railway all the money they need," that you have to increase the taxes to do it and they'd be against that. In the long run, it might be greatly to their advantage.

Int: I should think it would bring people downtown.

MF: At least try it out. I argue with SPUR a lot because they come out with some statements now and then that I think are extreme or incorrect, but in general I think they do a pretty good job.

Int: The other part of their name -- they are the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, as you pointed out.

MF: Well, they've also been an aid and a critic to the urban renewal process, particularly the Redevelopment Agency. They've done a long study on the plusses and minuses of urban renewal in San Francisco from its beginning and came out with the finding that on balance they have done a very good job, that it made some mistakes,

MF: but that it should get support because it had done an over-all good job.

They compared it with Redevelopment Agencies in other parts of the country and other cities and felt that this one here had done an outstandingly good job with some admitted errors, particularly the problem of relocation, which they were not aware of in their early days.

Int: Yes. We had friends struggling with the problems of relocation who were located about under where we are now, some years ago.

MF: Well, there never were too many people living in this area.

Int: This was small businesses.

MF: That relocation was not a great success because the produce market got divided. Part of it went to South San Francisco, and part of it went to Islais Creek.

Int: We were doing some work on the printing industry, and a lot of quite stable printers got awfully knocked around in that.

MF: Yes. Well, that was a mistake in the early days, although they were supposed to find relocation before they went in and razed an area. They just didn't do a very good job with it, but I think they are now. In fact, they have to. They can't move anybody, and there are moving allowances and relocation allowances.

Int: As witness Yerba Buena.

MF: Yes, and also Butchertown, which is an industrial park. They've been moving people out of there to clear that area for an industrial park, and the main people who have been moved out of there have been auto wreckers. They like to call themselves dismantlers. (It's like junk dealers are now salvage merchants or something. [Laughter]) But that was a great problem because this is one of the things everybody says is necessary, but nobody wants them. It's a sort of a blighted kind of an operation, although it doesn't have to be. It can be done on a cleaner basis.

Int: Do you have any feeling that some small or middle-sized businesses were lost to the city because of relocation problems?

MF: I think a few, but I think that's a minor problem. There have been an awful lot of lost small businesses, but I don't think that's

MF: the only reason. I think small businesses have been sort of going out of business. You really can't have this great growth of large business without -- you aren't going to have that plus all the other businesses.

This, I think, is a factor of economics -- that our system of distribution is trying to be more and more efficient, and apparently size does give a more efficient distribution. I think this is also part of what they're talking about with shopping centers versus neighborhood stores. That is, whether good or bad, something that is a factor of the automobile. People can get in their car and go where they want to go and do their shopping, whereas in the earlier communities, you walked down the street or took a bus or a streetcar, but very often you just walked a few blocks from wherever you lived to do your shopping. Well, there are a few places where that happens. But it's so small that those people that have tried to survive have less and less business.

Advertising and mobility of people, I think, have contributed to a whole new pattern of shopping. San Francisco has preserved its downtown shopping core better than most cities in the United States. It's one of the few relatively healthy downtown shopping areas. The reason for it is that in the first place it was very compact and also we have a large tourist industry, which helps that downtown section a great deal. Those stores downtown would be out of business tomorrow if they relied entirely on the resident population of San Francisco. Not even one of them, I don't think, would survive.

Int: You can tell when you walk into them during vacation season particularly.

MF: Yes. You go down now to the department stores or the specialty shops and you'll see, I'm sure, at least half the people will be from out of town. The people come to San Francisco to shop, and the shops exist because the people come.

Int: This takes us into transportation, and the future. There are so many aspects of this whole subject area.

MF: Yes, of the planning and development. Well, I could say that the work that I did with SPUR or the things that SPUR is doing are very closely related to what the Planning Department is doing, because we have an element in our master plan on transportation, on open space, on housing, on recreation. These are all elements of our San Francisco master plan which we're working on, plus the

MF: urban design plan. SPUR does some of the same kinds of things and, in many cases, has been very helpful to the Planning Department in supporting our views after having looked over the preliminary things and giving their -- I hate to use this word "input," but giving their views at least of what, hopefully, a cross-section of the city, which is SPUR membership, would like to see.

It's really one of the more responsive audiences that we have to listen to. Some groups, like the Chamber of Commerce and neighborhood groups, are unresponsive, I must say. I mean, they're critical without having made a careful investigation. SPUR is an over-all citywide organization which tries to synthesize the views of various neighborhoods. It is a forum where people from different points of view can come and on a private basis have a debate and learn something about the problems.

So, we'll continue on our next meeting.

(Interview #8 - August 8, 1973)

TRANSPORTATION

Int: Last week when we talked we were discussing planning and its various implications, and we had just arrived at the subject of transportation, I believe. You had mentioned the SPUR report that you thought was influential in having the city vote additional funds for the public transportation system.

I came across then something I'd forgotten, that in 1962 you had been appointed to a board --

MF: Something to do with BART?

Int: Citizens Committee for Rapid Transit.

MF: That was related to BART, I believe. My connection with that was that that was the time of the three-county election when the voters had to approve the BART project and authorize the issuance of the bonds, which were general obligation bonds of the three counties, that is, San Francisco, Alameda, and Contra Costa County.

I think that was a committee, and I was on the San Francisco part of it to, we might say, bring the project to the voters to urge them to vote for it. And they did. It was approved rather overwhelmingly in San Francisco, to my surprise. I thought it would be very close and that there would be even a question as to whether it would pass.

But the election was held in November. I wasn't here at the time. I was on a trip to the Orient. But I know when I left here in October it didn't look that hopeful, but it was passed. Of course, it took several years after that before they even got

MF: started because there was all kinds of litigation. That's one of the problems that BART has had.

They're criticized for its being behind on their schedule and their costs increasing. But immediately after it was approved by the voters in the three counties, there were various taxpayer's suits claiming that it had been improperly presented. I've forgotten all the various claims. But, as I recall, it was at least two years before they could do anything after they'd gotten the approval, which raised the costs and, of course, prolonged the whole program.

It was a highly controversial subject because it was talking about spending three-quarters of a billion dollars, which was a staggering sum.

Int: What was your part actually? What did you do in that?

MF: Well, it was just one of these Citizens Committees where you made some speeches. I think I may have had some debate on television or an appearance and some press releases that were issued in the name of the committee.

It was organized by three different counties. Mr. Adrien Falk was involved as the chairman of it.

Int: I was about to bring his name up.

MF: And then also Carl Wente. Both these gentlemen -- I keep mentioning people who are no longer alive.

Int: Carl Wente of Bank of America?

MF: Yes, it was Bank of America and, of course, the Wente family in the wine business. He, as I recall, was the head of the Citizens Committee or, more or less, the group to present it to the voters. They divided it into three different counties and my connection was with the San Francisco part of it. I think I was the chairman of the organization to get out the vote and to get out the "yes" vote.

Int: You mentioned once before that Mr. Falk had asked you to become --

MF: President of the United Bay Area Crusade.

Int: Was it he who interested you in BART?

MF: Yes, I think so.

Int: Were you good friends?

MF: Yes. We knew each other for many, many years. He was older than I was. I'd known Adrien Falk for a long time, and he worked on a variety of charitable and philanthropic things. He was a very fine man. Of course, he had been the head of S&W Corporation. He'd retired from it at the time and he got more active in civic activities. But I would say there's no question that he was the father of BART, rapid transit, and he spent an awful lot of his time working terribly hard on it.*

And it was not easy at all. I mean, the concept was popular that we should have a subway and rapid transit under the Bay and all of that, but there were many people that -- and maybe with good cause -- felt that the cost was just something we couldn't afford. That always comes up. There's always somebody who says, "Well, we can't afford it." Then the answer is, "Well, can we afford not to have it?"

But it was surprising. I only mentioned the fact that it was surprising to me that the bond issue passed with a pretty good margin because I'm not at all sure today that that would pass even though there's a demand for rapid transit. This was to be paid for and will have to be paid for in large part by the taxpayers of these three counties. They've been applying a portion of this tax ever since, I don't know whether it's '62, but say by '64. I think the concept of that is now: "Well, it's a fine idea, but it ought to be paid for by somebody else, not by property taxes." You see, it is a part of the property tax.

Int: And also sales tax?

MF: Yes, this became necessary after costs went up. The whole concept of BART was that the construction costs be paid for out of taxes and, hopefully, the maintenance cost, the operating cost, would be covered by fares. As time has gone on, it's not even too clear that that will be possible because of the operating cost. As of today, BART just had a thirty-day strike. They're starting their first operation and their costs will be up. I don't know what, but it will be a substantial amount over their estimates.

Int: That's pretty rotten luck.

*See also An Interview with Adrien J. Falk, Regional Oral History Office, completed in 1955, prior to his work on the BART system.

MF: They're having nothing but bad luck. They have engineering problems, and that's natural in a project of that size with a lot of new ideas, the automation and so forth. It's new.

Int: Every time I think, "When BART gets running, the streets will be clear," then I think, "Well, Paris has a wonderful transit system and you can hardly cross the streets."

MF: Paris. And New York City. How many subways do they have in New York? A dozen of them, running north and south. It doesn't work that way. And a growing population.

I don't know. As I said the other day, it seems to be the more facilities there are provided for people to move around, the more they move around. They become more mobile. The easier it is to move, it seems to be a natural thing that people move. With the age of the airplane, a lot more people travel.

Int: It makes you wonder that they have time to stay home and watch the television.

MF: Yes. Well, they don't stay home as much. People do go out of the homes a good deal more than they used to.

Int: You were looking at some statistics that were recently released on Bay Area cities' population growth. Is there an increase in the number of people who work in San Francisco?

MF: Yes, there is. The number of people who work in San Francisco is continually increasing because there's a change in the nature of the jobs. There's very little manufacturing in San Francisco, whereas at one time it had a manufacturing aspect to it. There's, I think, a decreased number of people in even the wholesaling. San Francisco was a big wholesaling center where large amounts of goods came. Distribution center is probably a better word. I think there's a decrease in that, but it's offset by the people that are working in the banking business, the insurance business, the real estate business, the many office workers. There's lots more office workers.

Int: So that it's a bigger city in the sense of being peopled in the daytime with more people?

MF: Yes, I'm pretty sure. Well, it must be bigger as far as daytime population than it's ever been.

Int: Does anyone count this?

MF: There are some figures on that. They're not usually publicized nearly as much as the other figure. Of course, the other figure is the census figure, which is the number of residents, which is down below 700,000. At one time I think San Francisco had a living-in population of over 800,000, close to 850,000.

EDUCATION

Int: This brings up a vexatious question. It ties in with many other aspects of planning, I know. When you have a city in which middle population drops out, as it has here to such a large extent, and goes to the suburbs, then you have this dreadful effect upon schools where you have middle class people wishing to take their children away so that they can go to school with their equals at least if not their superiors, so that it must roll up.

MF: It feeds on itself sort of, yes.

Int: What can be done?

MF: Well, I think, of course, it's very easy to say and a little hard to put into practice that a core city or a city like San Francisco -- they use this term "core city" -- which has the population mix that you refer to really is obliged to provide a superior education. If they ever can get in that position so that the education is really better -- that is, better teachers, better curriculum, better systems, maybe more imaginative concepts -- then this trend would be reversed. People would want to bring their children to the schools that give superior education.

I'm really not too familiar with the reasons, but San Francisco has been accused of having a very high cost of education. I think the cost per student is higher than it is elsewhere, but the quality is not. So there is probably something wrong there, something wrong with the mix or something wrong with the results. You don't necessarily get better education by spending more money for it. There's another ingredient that has to be in there. You don't automatically get better education just because you spend more money.

Int: Well, of course, if the criterion is achievement and you have a large proportion of black children who have very little cultural background, then it's stacked from the beginning against achievement tests because they don't have the starting capacity yet.

MF: But don't you think this is a generational thing? I mean, that is the situation today. But wouldn't it be reasonable to suppose that a generation from now that situation may be improved, that the children of the children who are now going to school who are getting not a very good education but at least they've gone to school -- hopefully, those families that come from that will be more interested in the subject of education.

I can't see any hope for it unless it moves in that direction. There are more, we'll say black children as an example, going to integrated schools, and hopefully some of that will rub off.

Int: But here in San Francisco -- this was what I think was in my mind -- where the proportion of black, Chicano and Chinese children is very high, the children from what we would call an average American cultural level become minority and these others don't have a chance to get anything from them because there aren't enough of them perhaps.

MF: Well, of course, if you mention the Chinese children, I think that would be an exception because I believe that the Chinese families probably feel that education is more important than any other racial group. In China, I guess, even the Confucian ethic is that education and the acquisition of knowledge is the most important thing. The only way you can get yourself up in the Chinese society is through education. You get a better job and so forth.

And the Chinese children do, as I'm sure you know, very well. Lowell High School, which is the preferred high school for college children, is full of Chinese children. There are too many of them on any kind of a proportionate number. You would think that those children who go there because they really want to, or the parents at least want them to get an education, might raise the level of expectation.

It's a very complex problem. But certainly if it just goes on and on and on and the quality keeps going down, it's very hard to reverse that. The claim is often made that there is a flight from the city of white middle class families for a variety of reasons -- the cost of housing, the crime rate -- but I think probably the single most important thing is the school situation. I believe more families move out of the city and go to the suburbs because they think, at least, that their children will get a better education.

HOUSING

MF: Of course, there is this theory, which is a good one, that you should try and have a dispersal. Take a region like the Bay Area. You should have a better proportion of racial minorities. They shouldn't all be in isolated clumps -- and that becomes a function of housing, or exclusionary policies in housing. If you study the regional housing problem, as many are today, there should be ideally a better mix with, say, subsidized housing in the suburbs.

I think that in the Bay Area you find that practically all of the subsidized housing is in San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond. I just saw those figures some place here. That excludes large areas of the Bay Area where there is not any such subsidized housing. Subsidized housing is equated with people of lower income and that, in turn, is also often equated with people of ethnic minorities.

The Department of Housing, HUD, is aware of that and there have been some studies of how they can gear their program of subsidized housing to give incentives to the suburban areas to have more there by giving them some special financial aids. It hasn't worked very well. We don't see very much subsidized housing in Hillsborough or Piedmont or in Marin County. But that is a well-acknowledged problem, that if you just keep concentrating it all in the middle of cities, you'll have this perpetuation of this downgrading in education.

Int: I gather there's some trend in the East of middle-income families coming back into the city because in urban slum areas house prices are low and there are houses that are good enough to rehabilitate. They get loans and rehabilitate them. Is there any possibility of that happening in San Francisco?

MF: Yes, there is a very good one. The San Francisco Planning Department is engaged in a study of that kind and I was asked, as a member of the Commission, to work with a couple of the people on the staff on what's called San Francisco housing strategy. Included in that is a strong emphasis on rehabilitation rather than slum clearance, and this varies. Some cities will work better than others.

We do have a housing stock in San Francisco that is subject to rehabilitation, quite a bit of it, which would hopefully create this somewhat lower cost without disrupting the neighborhood, without tearing down a lot of small houses and building a lot of blocks of public housing. The government housing financial aides are aware of that.

MF: I think we've gone through several eras in the housing things, and this seems to have a great deal of effect on other things you mentioned, such as education. First, a strong feeling that the -- and maybe this goes back almost twenty years -- answer to the problem was to create public housing. In New York you see these, I think, rather sad examples of acres and acres of large eight- or ten-story rather sterile looking buildings with cement courts between, and that clearly was a failure. It was a sort of a ghetto. It was a little better. They had plumbing and they had air conditioning and they had better type housing, but from a social point of view it was really destructive.

The next phase was the redevelopment, where you went in and cleared a large area of substandard housing and built new housing. But that has been almost the same kind of a thing, plus the fact that that had this very negative factor of displacing people. I mean, to clear the area. There was somebody there, and they had to go live some place else.

I think now the thought is that the emphasis should be on where public housing is necessary, it should be small in character and dispersed all over the city, where you would have small units of public housing. We have some of that in San Francisco.

Int: After we stopped taping last time we talked, we were looking at this 1947 report* in which there's a projected view of the Jefferson Square neighborhood.

MF: Yes. Western Addition. And that, fortunately, was never built that way.

Int: And you mentioned that something else was built there.

MF: Well, St. Francis Square, which is in that general area, which has a few big buildings, but mostly these are two-story buildings that have the appearance of a sort of a nice subdivision type of thing with lots of open space. That is a reasonably well racially integrated area, reasonably well, not as well as it should be. But there are blacks and Chicanos and some Orientals and whites living there together. But this low key and small scale, I think, is preferable.

Int: Did you say that you provided some seed money?

*San Francisco City Planning Commission, New City: San Francisco Redeveloped, December 1947. Large multi-story buildings are shown in the projection.

MF: Well, not in St. Francis Square. That's so-called A-1, and then there's A-2, which goes a little further to the west. A-1 was a reasonable success. A-2 hoped to learn some more from the mistakes of the first one.

I was involved in a project there known as Martin Luther King Square, which is of medium density. But I would say that wasn't too successful either.

Int: Was that a combination of public and private financing?

MF: Yes. Private financing, so-called seed money. That is to get the plans together, to hire the architect, to hire the financial consultant for the feasibility study and then present this project. And there were government funds available to finance it once the package was put together.

But there was a high degree of risk because if the project didn't prove feasible, then it wouldn't go ahead and whatever money had been spent would be, you might say, down the drain. But this one did go ahead. But since then it's fallen on a lot of evil days. The unit or the project is in default, and the government, that financed the mortgage, has taken it over and they will attempt to resell it. It's 100 per cent populated by black people. The concept of the law is that it must be an integrated neighborhood, but it didn't work out that way.

Int: What went wrong?

MF: Well, it's a long story. It's in a typically black community. There was a demand by the residents there, you might say the so-called civic leaders, that it be a black project, that it have to have a black architect, that it have to have a black contractor. They didn't change the architect, but we did have to get another contractor who was a black-sponsored contractor. It was a national concern and they were inexperienced and they didn't do a very good job. They were slow in building it and the quality of their building wasn't very good, and there were delays.

This was a demand by, we'll say, the community. That was the way it was going to be and the people that were working on it had to be black, the carpenters and the plumbers. There weren't that many of them around that were experienced, so the project cost more money and took longer to build, which sort of put them in the hole financially from the day they started.

MF: Rents weren't paid, but it was very difficult under that kind of a circumstance to throw people out who didn't pay their rent. It was being run by the community and hopefully -- I say hopefully because many answers are really not found yet -- other projects will not have some of those disadvantages.

Int: When you build new housing like that, how long is it supposed to last?

MF: It should last twenty-five to thirty years. I think the mortgage on them is about thirty years. I don't know whether some of these will last or not because there's the element of maintenance. From a financial point of view, you might say it's very tight. There's an allowance there for maintenance, which theoretically will maintain it, but when things don't go well and the rents aren't paid and the project is in financial trouble, the first thing you can cut out is maintenance -- landscaping, for example.

There was a beautiful design for landscaping, but I've gone out there and looked at it. Some of these trees don't look very well. I don't think they're being watered or taken care of. Because when the financial bind is on, well, the first thing you can drop is maintenance and, hopefully, maybe they'll pick it up again some day. But I would say that many of these places are under-maintained, which certainly has something to do with the life of the project. I mean, they have to be painted and roofs have to be repaired.

Int: You'd think a community, if it had that much spirit, would get out and water the trees.

MF: Well, that was the hope, that the neighborhood being a community project, the tenants and the residents would get together and they would have their own maintenance project. Security is a problem too. There's vandalism, and people are afraid to live there.

I'm always a little optimistic. I think that maybe this can happen: because of bad experiences the neighborhood can pull itself together and try and maintain a certain amount of, we'll say, pride in the project. But it hasn't happened yet.

Int: I suppose the smaller the project, the more chance there is for that to happen.

MF: Yes. A smaller project certainly would have a better chance because with a small amount of money they could make a showing.

MF: But I think that people that live in subsidized housing and public housing -- that is said many times -- just don't have a particular interest in the housing. They'd like to get out of there. I mean, they're there while they're in an economic position, and as they become more affluent they're going to move out and move into something else.

Int: Do they ever move out?

MF: There is some mobility, yes. There's some. It depends a lot on the economic status, but there are certainly some that get out of there. They get out of the housing and, hopefully, they get out of the welfare class.

This is a factor of new jobs and less discrimination in hiring, all of which we have. I mean, I think there's a move in that direction. There are certainly many more members of minority groups in San Francisco that I can speak of that have good jobs, better than they had twenty years ago, because the financial district is full of them. These are people with white-collar jobs. These people, if they had jobs, certainly were not earlier in the financial district or in the retail business, in journalism and the medical field and other things. There's a movement in that direction.

Int: You were discussing the part of private development in housing. The San Francisco Development Company, was that the organization?

MF: The San Francisco Development Fund, is that the one you're referring to?

Int: Was that the one that was involved with Martin Luther King Square?

MF: No, that was just my son and I personally as two individuals who did this thing. The San Francisco Development Fund is a small organization that I'm also connected with which has done some experimental things in housing and the concept of housing ownership. We received some funds from the government to do some experimenting.

The government is very much interested in finding new ways to encourage ownership of housing and better housing. That Fund's first experiment was to give a subsidy to people qualified who were screened, who appeared to have the opportunity to move up the economic ladder. What they needed was a little help to get a house and then it was a subsidy which was keyed to their level of income. In other words, as their income went up, the subsidy went down. Hopefully, at some point, they wouldn't need a subsidy, but they'd end up owning the house.

MF: There was some evidence that if the applicants were properly screened to find out whether they had the ability to move up and there was also a high degree of counselling as to how they set up a budget -- if you owned a house, how did you provide for such things as maintenance -- and with that information and a selected group, there was evidence over a several-year period that many of these people made it. In other words, they were able to get better jobs and therefore maintained their houses.

One of the keys there was that they needed advice. Most people that buy a house do it once in a lifetime. They've never had any prior experience, particularly if they come from a low economic level. They can just about take care of the payments. Unless they have some advice -- first, what kind of a house to buy, not just to go and buy an overpriced house, just make sure that it was fairly well built and didn't have a lot of problems. And that they must set aside a certain amount of their budget every year to pay the insurance bill when it came due, to pay the repairs and to maintain the house.

If they didn't have that information, then they'd buy a house but within a few years their mortgage would be foreclosed and they'd be out on the street again. But with a certain amount of technical advice, they could make it.

There is a provision in the Housing Act, I believe, that the government can provide that kind of technical service for people who are of low income levels. The subsidy that they got which went toward the payments of the house proved to be not as important under this experiment of the San Francisco Development Fund as the counselling they got on what kind of a house, and to not get over their head with mortgage payments, and to understand a budget. That was more important than the subsidy.

Int: Was it a pilot program that started and stopped?

MF: Yes. It had, I think, a two- or three-year term. It was done with a control group, so it was a fairly scientific experiment. It was done with a group of similar people who didn't get the advice or didn't get the subsidy, and what the results of those people were as against those that did and where the differences were.

Int: So it was instrumental in making future policy?

MF: Yes.

Int: About when did that end?

MF: Well, that project, I think, started around 1968 and ran till about 1970 or something like that, maybe '67. I've forgotten exactly.

Then this Development Fund is now engaged in another program as a result of that, which is partly funded by the Ford Foundation, partly by the government and partly by another private local foundation. They've tried to use some of these concepts obtained in the first one in helping people get housing. There's not the same degree of subsidy, but there is this degree of advice and counselling. That appears to be reasonably successful too.

Int: People want it enough so that even if they don't get paid for it they come and get the advice?

MF: Yes. I think the element is there, as I said, that most people just haven't had much experience. There's a certain amount of sales pressure by the seller who gives all kinds of information, some right and some wrong, to buy the house.

The term that was used was a "buyer's agent." That is, there should be somebody who's working in the interests of the buyer. In other words, usually there's a lot of people working in the interests of the seller. There's the real estate brokers who want to make the sale. But there's not the counterpart who is, we'll say, adviser to the buyer as to what kind of a house to buy and how to budget for it.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Int: This subject is not really related, but the preservation of old buildings, such as the Haas-Lilienthal house ...

MF: Yes. The historic monuments, historic preservation. We have a law in San Francisco which is very weak in that respect, but it does something. They are designated historic landmarks. The Planning Department is involved in that because we have to approve these, and then they go to the Board of Supervisors.

Once so designated, the owner can't substantially change or demolish the house for -- well, the effect is for one year after he gives notice of intention that he wants to do so once it has that designation. The hope is there that within the year, if it's clear that the owner is going to demolish or substantially alter the house, there will be some citizens' group arise on the scene

MF: that will buy it or find another use for it.

Int: Has it worked, do you feel?

MF: Well, it's fairly new. We haven't had too many instances of where the owner has wanted to demolish. Of course, this designation includes a lot of buildings like churches and public buildings. There's no real problem there as a rule. The problem arises in commercial buildings or residences, and the owners of some of these resist this because they say, "Well, we just can't continue to go ahead -- the house is obsolete, it's useless."

The Haas-Lilienthal house belongs to a family. They were very cooperative. They wanted to do everything. But others say, "We just don't have the money to maintain this nice house for other people to look at," because the family has died off and there's only one descendant. Maybe it's a widow or something and she has to move out and go into an apartment. "So," they say, "We have to sell the house." In other words, people will buy it and somebody's going to tear it down and build an apartment.

There have been, I think, two cases where the designation has been made and the owner has filed to demolish. The year hasn't run on them yet, but there are one or two that I think are going to go down because they can't find any useful purpose for them. But we're studying that further.

One of the problems for the owner is that they're asked to maintain this house for the benefit of the public, but they don't get any tax relief and the taxes on the house are very high.

Int: Is there a possibility that there will be tax relief?

MF: I don't know. It's difficult because it would require an amendment to the state law. The assessor has to assess property on a basis of its value, what anybody would pay for it, and it would require an amendment in the state law. We've examined other states that have these laws and, in some cases, there is some tax abatement, tax relief.

But it's a difficult thing to do to make it equitable. How much should the relief be? And it has to be established that it's in the general public interest because whenever you give tax abatement or tax relief to one piece of property, it means other pieces of property have to be somewhat higher taxed to pay the cost. So it becomes a sort of a community cost to maintain these buildings.

Int: I know of one house that perhaps you have in mind too, the Leander Sherman house.

MF: The Sherman house, yes.

Int: I gather the owner could be fairly comfortable if she could sell her house ...

MF: Oh yes.

Int: And while she has to keep it, she has difficulties.

MF: Not only that, she doesn't get any income from this very valuable piece of property, but has spent a lot of money just to keep it painted and repaired. She's done this for many years, but she's now said, "Well, I've just come to the end of the rope. I don't have the money to do it."

Now, the only way you can save that house is to find some other use for it, some use other than a dwelling. It has to be used for some eleemosynary institution or something of that kind, which the Hass-Lilienthal house will be. It's going to be the Heritage Council.

Int: The Jackson Square district, however, is a quite different --

MF: Yes. Well, that's commercially viable. I mean, values there have gone up. This designation encourages people there to maintain their places, to plant street trees, and the whole ambience of the place is rather attractive. The owners of the property can get more rent than they could if it had just sort of gone down and become another wholesale old building area.

Int: Still, didn't at least one owner feel that it put a limit on the value of the property in the long run?

MF: Yes, there is that statement because there's a height limit. But I think over-all, owners of Jackson Square property have benefited by the fact that it has been designated. First it was sort of an unofficial thing. The owners just did it by themselves. Now that it's an official district, I think it's fairly evident that it's better to own a piece of property there with the designation of "historic area" than without because just beyond it property has deteriorated and rentals have gone down. In that particular area, rentals haven't gone down. There are a few vacancies now and then, but they seem to fill up again.

MF: It has a very special use. I mean, it's the wholesale furniture and draperies and wallpaper and so forth. It's sort of a whole new industry for San Francisco. Instead of being scattered around, it's better to have them all together because the buyers can go there and walk around and find what they want to buy. That works out very well.

The problem, I think, really comes in the residential area. What do you do with an old house like the Sherman house, which was designed for a family, and there isn't any family there? And there's not going to be any family that wants to occupy a house like that. It takes three or four servants to maintain it, and that's just not a way of life any more.

Int: It used to be, before there was such strict zoning, that you could cut it up into apartments.

MF: Well, it still can be done in that particular case because I think that's in an area where it is allowed, but it takes money to do that, and the present owner doesn't want to do that. She's not interested in real estate. Somebody may come along who will do just that and make apartments out of it.

But I think, even then, the best investment for the owner would be to tear it down because it's in a pretty good area near Union Street that has some commercial value, and if the conversion thing were done, the owner would lose something by it. Now, it's a question of whether the community can persuade the owner to do that. But there are property rights involved which always come up in these situations.

Harroun: Was the home of your grandparents on California Street of a type similar to the Hass-Lilienthal house?

MF: No. As I remember it, I don't think it was very much of an architectural gem. It was a wooden house. It was okay. I wouldn't have said that it had great historic value.

It depends on when you look at it. Right now, Victorian architecture is considered great, but I can remember when it was considered the ugliest thing in the world. It's just had a renaissance now of popularity. Maybe it's because there are not so many of them left. But rows and rows of these places were not that attractive. A lot of them were built after the fire and they weren't really great architectural gems at the time.

Int: They're apparently easy to make attractive now, but it's not easy, I'm sure, to bring them up to code.

MF: It can be done. Well, it's the vogue now. I remember we had this vogue of everybody wanting Spanish type architecture. That was terribly popular in California. Now people don't think very much of those old red tile and cement stucco things. There is a matter of style, which changes all the time. But right now, Victorian is big. Everybody likes it.

Int: You are now chairman of the Committee on Bay Area Environment of the Bay Area Council. Have you been active in the Bay Area Council for a long time?

MF: Oh, four years or so. The only thing that committee has done is to have an annual contest. We've awarded a first, second, third, and fourth prize, or first prize and honorable mention. The concept there was to recognize corporations and community groups and municipalities who had tried, apparently, and had done something a little above and beyond the call of duty to create a good building or a good plan, these awards being given by the Bay Area Council, which is largely a business group. It's supported by business and industry, feeling that they should show their interest in this kind of improvement in environment.

There are awards given by architectural groups, the AIA, American Institute of Architects, and others. But the business community had never shown that they were interested in this. The hope of this effort is that it will encourage people to do things in order to get the award. I'm not sure that it has done that, but at least it has recognized those who have done it.

Int: Has it awakened interest among the business people in this area?

MF: Yes. There's been a certain feedback. We started in without too many submittals and now, in the last year, we've gotten an awful lot from all over the Bay Area. It takes a job to go and screen them.

Int: Who decides?

MF: We usually appoint a panel of people -- architects, city planners, people in the real estate development field, and one or two members of the Bay Area Council board. I don't know whether we'll continue that again this year or not, but it's about time to consider it if we're going to have another contest.

THE GOLDEN GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Int: This brings us up to the Golden Gateway Center. Here is a Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill publication of June, 1957.* That was when they were clearing land for it.

MF: They were engaged to help the Redevelopment Agency. I believe this is the one you speak of. This was their general development plan, the general concept without being specific.

They were engaged to help the Redevelopment Agency popularize this concept. The Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, which was a group of businessmen which still exists I believe, financed this study by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. This was the preliminary preliminary. Then, after that, when it was designated as a development area with certain guidelines, the concept that they had was that it should have some commercial buildings and it should have some housing, etc., etc., etc.

Int: Light industrial, it says in this.

MF: Yes, well, things got changed a little bit. [Reads from report.] "Four blocks for light industry have been reserved in the perimeter blocks fronting on Battery Street and Broadway." But there was a strong emphasis on residential. "1,600 dwelling units." Well, it'll be more than that when it's finished.

This was an over-all plan, and then there was a contest asking groups of developers to come in and submit two things: how much they'd pay for the land and what they would do with it. The determination of who got the award, if we could call it that, was based on these two factors. It wasn't necessarily going to go to the one that would pay the most for it, but it was a blending. They had to pay a reasonable amount and then they had to also submit a plan that was acceptable. The plan was judged by a panel of the Redevelopment Agency and others, and the group that I was associated with was, we'll say, the award winner.

Int: So you were associated with the Golden Gateway redevelopment before you were connected with SPUR?

MF: I think so, because this goes back to twelve or thirteen years ago

*Titled The Golden Gateway.

MF: now. Or maybe it was about the same time. I was somewhat connected with SPUR, I guess, at about that time.

The project is about half finished -- that is, the residential phase -- and this building that we're in today* was part of it. As this original plan got further and further refined, it was decided there should be an office building and commercial, convenience shopping and residential facilities.

As I say, there were ten different groups that submitted proposals. One of them, actually, was Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, who then had another client. This plan that we now have was considered the best on the combination of its financial viability plus its architectural features.

Int: And who were the architects for this?

MF: The architects for this were Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons -- not this particular building, but the over-all architecture. This building was built by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. But the over-all supervising architects were Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons.

The Golden Gateway, in general, was divided into two groups. This was the first group here, and then that other part of it came along later. That was the land that was sold. That was up for competitive bids, but on a slightly different basis. There was no architectural contest. It was land left over after what's known as the Golden Gateway proper was started.

That's known as Embarcadero Center, but it's part of the general Golden Gateway Redevelopment area. That land was then put up for bid. As a matter of fact, they had a hard time finding anybody that would buy it. It dragged along for quite a few years and then the group represented by David Rockefeller, Trammel Crow, and John Portman were the successful bidders for it.

They built one building and they built the hotel that we see, the Hyatt Regency Hotel. On the drawing board there is Office Building #2, and there's projected another two office buildings to complete the whole project.

Int: There's some opposition to the completion?

MF: There's opposition to the completion of the Golden Gateway residences. In my opinion it's not very strong opposition.

*Alcoa Building

Int: On the other hand, you have Mr. Nathaniel Owings now saying he's sorry about his highrises.

MF: Yes. Mr. Owings goes hot and cold. He thinks that he's made some mistakes and he's confessing.

But the two projects, the Embarcadero Center and the Golden Gateway Center, were really more or less fixed at the time the awards or the land was sold or offered for sale. There are now attempts to say, "Well, stop and let's have another look at it," but there are some rather serious problems because there was a contract between the developers and the Redevelopment Agency to do the things that were provided.

It's sort of hard to stop in the middle of the road, even though there are some people that would like to.

Int: What would happen if it were stopped? Contractors would lose?

MF: Well, if it was stopped, the land still belongs to the Redevelopment Agency, and that really is city funds. They'd have to sell it some day. They just don't have the money to hold it forever. Then you'd have to start in with a whole new plan, I suppose. Whether you'd come out better or worse is, I guess, a question of opinion.

It was planned as a total concept. If it had been divided into two or three places, I think the plan might have been done quite differently.

But anyway, my connection with the Golden Gateway goes back to the period in which these groups were being formed of developers, architects, financial groups. I was persuaded to join with a group; the major thrust there was the Perini Corporation, who were contractors. They wanted to come out here. They had some experience in land and they were anxious to get in on this development.

So we formed this local group, and they wanted to have some local identification, being unknown in the area. So they asked some of us who had some interest, and I was one that was asked to join. One of the contributions I think I made was I said, "Well, I will, but I want to have something to say about who the architect is," and I did put forward Mr. Wurster's name. I don't know whether I can recall exactly whether I said, "If Mr. Wurster isn't the architect, I won't join it," because it really never got to that.

MF: The Perinis were delighted to have Wurster. His office was most capable and obviously did a pretty good plan because their design won the competition.

Then, at a later time, the Alcoa Company, the Aluminum Company of America, joined as a partner. That was at the phase at which we were about to build this office building, and they bought into the partnership, you might say -- acquired some of the interest from the other partners, and were given the opportunity to have their name on the building.

Int: Had you owned real estate in this area before?

MF: I had never owned any, no. You see, all of this big area, which was mainly the produce district (although the part over on Market Street was some older office buildings) was designated as a redevelopment project. The Redevelopment Agency had acquired the property, razed the buildings, and then resold the property, which is the regular redevelopment process.

Int: So you had no special knowledge of this area?

MF: No, although I've been looking at it for most of my life! [Laughter]

Int: You said that you had some part in choosing some of its finest features, I think.

MF: The art. Well, there was a provision. When the Redevelopment Agency, say, awarded or sold the land to a developer -- in this case two different groups -- there were many conditions. The conditions were that they had complete architectural review on the project, what was built here. But one of the conditions was that a certain percentage of the cost had to be devoted to art for the benefit, really, of the general public, rather than art for the specific people that were living in the buildings.

So then the question came along: How are we going to buy the art? The purchase of art is always a highly controversial thing, as witness the Vaillancourt Fountain and quite a few other things. So, being one of the local partners, I said I had a suggestion that we form a committee and, you might say, insulate ourselves from the second-guessing of the general public while getting somebody involved who was at least an authority on the subject.

So we selected a panel. I said I would undertake to do that, and I acted as the chairman of the group. We got the director of the De Young Museum, the director of the San Francisco Museum of Art,

MF: and a representative of the San Francisco Art Institute. Working with the architects and myself, as the representative, in a sense, of the developer, we made the selection of the art, the fountains, and so forth. But the architects were also involved in making suggestions. This panel would more or less say that this was good or not so good, and that we should have a variety of contemporary art and something that was maybe a little more traditional. I think we've got a pretty good blend over-all.

Int: The Henry Moore -- is there a special story about that?

MF: Well, the only story about the Henry Moore is that we wanted for that particular open area a nice piece of sculpture. There was a show on in San Francisco at the time at the San Francisco Museum of Art, a British show which had been brought to this country, and included therein was this Henry Moore sculpture. So it happened to be in San Francisco. It belonged to one of the representatives of Henry Moore, one of the dealers that handle his things. So we got together and purchased it. It was one of the more expensive pieces that we bought as a single piece.

Int: But other things you commissioned?

MF: We commissioned the [Francois] Stahly Fountain and that was a sort of a mini-contest we ran. We wanted a fountain there and we asked people who had done this kind of thing. We screened various people to submit ideas and he was selected. He submitted what we thought was the best proposition, so we brought him out here and we commissioned that.

The other thing that was commissioned was this Woodward Fountain here, this dandelion or chrysanthemum or whatever you call it. Robert Woodward, he was an Australian. That name was brought to us by one of the partners of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, Mr. Bassett, who had seen this man's work in Sidney, Australia, and thought he had done some rather good things. So that was commissioned.

There's a piece of sculpture out in the west side here by a man by the name of Charles Perry, who has recently done a great, big one in the Hyatt House.

Int: I can stand and look at that for a long time.

MF: That is fine. Perry was a Californian who was really living in Europe most of the time. He was really, I think, basically more of an engineer than a sculptor because he always deals with curves and lines. That Perry out there was the first thing that he'd done in this country, and that was commissioned.

Int: I like yours better than Hyatt's.

MF: Well, it's a little better scale. The one in the Hyatt sort of fills the room, although that's terribly impressive.

As you stand and look at the one in the Alcoa Plaza and see the light coming through it, you see all kinds of things that are there. He had a little show on here at the San Francisco Museum and I bought one of his things which I have at home, a Perry which is quite different from that. But it is also composed of various curves and lines.

Int: Is this one of Stahly's, the Fountain of Four Seasons?

MF: The Four Seasons, yes.

Int: Under what conditions do you have the Beniamino Bufano pieces here?

MF: Most of those Bufanos are just on loan, because the status of who owns what is still very unclear. You may have heard. He had a lot of things when he died, but nobody knows who they belong to. So there was the suggestion that they at least be put on display. We don't own any of those things. We may buy some some day if we ever find out who owns them. It's unclear whether his wife owns them, or his son, or his creditors, or who.

We have one Bufano that we bought, which is a big penguin at the end of the street down there. I think it's a penguin or some kind of a bird. That one we bought. That was really at the suggestion of the Wurster office. They liked Bufano and thought we ought to have at least one Bufano.

Now, in this last phase that we're engaged in, which we hope to get started, we will be selecting art again, but we're going to do it a little differently. I'm not quite sure, but I don't think we'll have this official panel. I don't think we need it. We've demonstrated that the art in here is fairly acceptable and I don't think we have to go through quite so much. There are some difficulties in trying to get three or four people together who ever agree on anything.

Int: Do you feel that the housing so far in this area is satisfactory?

MF: Oh, I think in general yes, over-all, because the buildings have been occupied fairly well. They're over 90 per cent occupied, or 95 per cent. People that live here find many conveniences in being able to walk to work.

MF: There have been some people that have moved into the Golden Gateway who formerly lived in the suburbs. There's been a little trend of that kind and it was hoped that that would happen, that people who want smaller units would come. There's a high degree of security here, a big security force. People can go away and leave places with a certain degree of security. It's lighted at night, and there's a garage you can drive in and go into your house without having to go outside.

I think the concept of having housing in the financial district or in the business district has been fairly successful. It's the only example, really, we have of that where it's close in and new housing. They're all rental units, which has a certain appeal. A lot of people didn't want to own something. They want maybe to live there for three years or five years and then move on.

A lot of younger people come to San Francisco and don't know just where they want to live yet. They haven't really got their roots down. This is convenient for them. I think it's been a successful concept.

Int: I guess the Fox Plaza is a little bit similar, but with the Market Street construction now it's hard to assess.

MF: It's somewhat similar, yes. The Fox Plaza has been reasonably successful. That's a slightly different concept and it's the only one of its kind, where you have a combination in one building of living and office space. I don't quite understand why that concept hasn't taken on, why there aren't a lot more of them, because it's a good idea.

Int: I guess the Jack Tar did a modified version of that with offices and hotel.

MF: Yes, but that's a hotel for transients, as against apartments. It's a good use of the land to have both these things in there. My son happened to be involved in the Fox Plaza. He was on the staff of the company that started it. He was there during the construction stage and then became the manager of the project. (He left there some years ago.) So I know something about that. It's been relatively successful.

TRENDS AND REACTIONS

Int: What about the problem of over-building? If you get Yerba Buena with all its facilities, and this, and all the other planned construction --

MF: Well, there's not much housing contemplated. There is this low-cost housing project in Yerba Buena. But the big element of Yerba Buena is the convention center.

Int: Hotels?

MF: Well, there will be a hotel there. The hotel is not the big feature of that. That's a sort of an added thought. And office buildings. But I don't know when those office buildings will be built. They will be built, but when they'll be built will depend on the demand and supply situation, because what they've projected there is a tremendous amount of office buildings. I would guess that it won't get built for twenty years because I don't think that the demand will be sufficient.

Int: There'd have to be a lot more daytime population?

MF: Yes. And it will be competitive with other areas that are also building, and we have a tremendous amount of office building now in the planning and actually in the construction stage.

Int: Hotels too. Do you think there's a danger that we'll be over-built?

MF: Oh, I think we're already over-built on hotels. But the whole concept of Yerba Buena, at least as far as the convention center, which is a very large part of it -- that's the heart of the concept, that that will bring people to the city to provide people who come here for conventions living in hotels.

Int: We do lose some conventions.

MF: Yes, we've been losing quite a few of the larger ones, and they are now booking conventions for four, five, six years ahead on the assumption that the facilities will be built. These big ones usually make their arrangements at least five years in advance. I know the AMA* is one of the big ones. They usually rotate. I mean, they

*American Medical Association

MF: go, over a five-year cycle or a three-year cycle, one time on the west coast and one time on the east coast and one time in the middle west.

It's a growing business, apparently, the convention business. I have some misgivings about it. It seems to be somewhat of an artificial business. It isn't a real solid business, people rushing around the country going to conventions. But, in spite of that, it is growing.

San Francisco has many advantages as a convention center. I think there's no question that it is the number one place. It's not just a place to go to a convention, but there are other things you can do when you come to San Francisco. You have the whole state of California and then many people go on to Hawaii. They can incorporate a convention with a vacation and bring their family along, as opposed to going to Kansas City, which is also quite an important convention center. I don't want to say anything negative about Kansas City, but when you get to Kansas City there isn't an awful lot you can do except go to a convention and then go home again.

But there are a lot of things you can do in California. You can go down to the Monterey Peninsula and you can go up the Redwood Highway and you can go up to the Sierras. There are many things that give it an advantage. And also there's still the idea that a lot of people want to come to San Francisco. They want to come to California. They've never been here. And the convention business is not only national, but international.

Int: I suppose any recession or depression will hit the hotel and tourist business hard.

MF: Yes, yes. It certainly is an avoidable expense. People do not have to travel and do not have to go to conventions.

Int: The office building space thing -- I've heard it said by maybe far-out thinkers that as automation continues to overtake manual work in offices, there'll be less and less need for people in offices. Twenty-five years ago would you have had a larger staff than you have now here in this office?

MF: Well, I don't know. If I were doing what I'm doing today, I wouldn't. I think that may be true, but so far we don't seem to have reached that point. It would seem reasonable that machines, if they do the work of people, will replace people. It's hard to take the negative

MF: point of view that they won't, but there's not much evidence that they have. There's this concept that it takes people to build computers and to service computers.

I think maybe why that gloomy prediction, if that's what it is, won't take place is that we seem to have an insatiable thirst for information. We compile a lot more statistics. We assemble more material. You know more if you assemble more figures.

Then, of course, the other side of the coin may be that that will be somewhat offset by shorter work weeks. There is already this concept of a four-day week instead of a five-day week, so that you won't decrease the number of people. You may even increase the number of people, but they'll work less and have more leisure.

Int: It used to be considered something that made for speedy moral decay, to have so much leisure.

MF: Well, if leisure is used in its best sense, not idleness, leisure can be something pretty good, which means you use your spare time when you're not working or gainfully employed to acquire knowledge or to spend some time in the country to maybe practice some other skills, such as gardening or forestry or something of that kind, or just to study and learn. In other words, idleness and leisure are different.

I sort of feel sorry for people who say, "I have so much time, I don't know what to do with it." That certainly would be moral degeneration or intellectual degeneration.

Int: You mentioned before we were taping that during the time that you'd been involved in city planning and SPUR and so forth, there had been a homeowners' revolt and a conservationists' revolt, and I guess a freeway revolt.

MF: Yes.

Int: The freeway revolt -- if they tear down the Embarcadero Freeway, you're going to be a little isolated here, aren't you?

MF: Well, I don't think anybody's thinking of tearing down the Embarcadero freeway and not providing an alternate or substitute. The concept is to put it underground or a depressed freeway, because the traffic still has to move around the city.

There's a national, and maybe it hasn't got international yet, revolt against the freeway and the automobile. It's a funny thing.

MF: Everybody's against the automobile, except they drive their own car. They're against the other fellow with the automobile. THE automobile is bad, but MY automobile is an absolute necessity. [Laughter] Until people start riding bicycles or walking, I don't think it's going to amount to very much because the number of cars sold every year goes up and up and up.

Int: The freeway revolt was a very early expression of that though, wasn't it?

MF: Very early in San Francisco, and it was quite appropriate for San Francisco with its very limited space. People started realizing that when you build one of these freeways, you destroy a tremendous area of something, buildings of some kind. It's not just the freeway. It's the approaches and the circles that have to be built too. It just takes acres and acres and there isn't that kind of space in the city of San Francisco.

Los Angeles is a different situation. They've got nothing but space, empty space, and other parts of the world. But San Francisco is a compact and so limited that to build great, big freeways through here would just destroy the whole city and, in some cases, it has done some bad things.

The underground freeway, which is the alternative to it, also has some problems. The construction of the underground -- we have an example in Market Street, which has been torn up for five or six years. Really, that thing isn't that big. It's a two-track thing, but look what it does to the city when you start tunnelling under the city.

Int: That little tunnel they had in front of the Ferry Building was hard to build, wasn't it?

MF: Yes. It was floating in the water. It was always leaking. It was only, I think, one lane each way and it was very destructive during the time it was being built because at that time they had streetcars and things down there.

So you start providing underground freeways and it's not that simple either.

Int: What about the homeowners' revolt you were speaking of, on taxes? Has that had a long-term effect?

MF: I'm not quite sure what you're referring to specifically, if I used that term.

Int: I guess you were talking about the tax rates on privately owned homes.

MF: Well, that's had some effect, certainly. I mean, politicians are very wary of doing anything to raise taxes and there have been some alternative taxes devised, such as the sewer tax in San Francisco, which is really just changing from Tweedle-dum to Tweedle-dee because the same people pay it. But it doesn't seem as bad because you get the bill every month instead of getting it twice a year. It's spread out a little bit but it's taken the same bite. And I think there are some gross receipts tax and business taxes and other things which provide something.

Int: Is that having any effect on building?

MF: Home building?

Int: Yes.

MF: Oh, I don't think it has had very much. But the tax rate in San Francisco has sort of leveled off. But that's a bit of a delusion. What people look at is their tax bill and their tax rate, and the reason the tax bill and the tax rate on the homeowner hasn't gone up is because the assessed values of these downtown properties has increased so much that the tax base has been lifted somewhat from the family. But it's still too high and it presents a great problem, particularly for retired people that are living on a fixed income. I happen to be one of them, so I know what I'm talking about. My income is fixed and the cost of everything keeps going up.

I don't think we've solved that problem yet, but the concept of revenue sharing and the state assuming more of the municipal cost has done something to ease the problem. The mayors of all the cities in the United States have said, "We just can't put any more burden on the homeowner through real estate tax, or the renter, who gets it indirectly. We've got to find some other way." They're getting that message very loud and clear.

Int: How about business assuming the additional burden? Has that caused any great problems?

MF: Well, it can in a way if it's not equally distributed. In other words, take San Francisco specifically. If costs of doing business in San Francisco get to be very much higher than they would be in Oakland or San Mateo, business is not going to stay in San Francisco. But if it's spread out on a regional basis and, hopefully,

MF: on a more equitable even statewide basis, so everybody is hurt equally, why, then you won't have a shift.

Int: I suppose something could happen similar to the inventory tax which has forced people in warehousing out of the city.

MF: Yes. That has had an effect, although I don't think that's the main reason why industry has moved out of San Francisco, if they have.

Int: I was thinking mainly of distribution centers.

MF: You have to pay it in San Mateo too. The main reason people have moved from here is because of the type of building they can get, a large area of inexpensive land with parking and access for employees, as against operating in a congested city area. I think that's been more important than the tax, although the tax is used as one of the reasons. The tax rate here is not that much higher than it is in San Mateo County or Alameda County.

Int: Then you were speaking of the revolt of the conservationists.

MF: Of course, we have this concept of Save-the-Bay, which was the BCDC,* which is now a fact and has been very effective. The most recent thing is this coastal initiative to preserve the coast. That's a much more difficult project, actually, because the coast is pretty long and there are many uses.

But these are all evidences that people feel that if there are not strict laws, the available open space and land will just be destroyed, and once destroyed and eliminated it's an irreversible process. You can't go back and reverse it. My own opinion is that some of the conservationist measures have gone too far, but this is not unnatural in the United States of America. They're now at the point where they're saying, "No!" to everything without picking out the good and the bad.

But the Save-the-Bay or the BCDC project was not that kind of an overkill thing. The concept was to allow the use of the Bay, but only on a restrictive basis, and to make a plan. They have a plan and it encourages the use of the Bay for proper maritime purpose and for industries that have to be on the Bay, that can't exist anywhere else, and discourages just using the Bay, because it's open, to fill it in and create more land. That, I think, has been very successful.

*Bay Conservation & Development Commission

MF: But the conservationist group the Sierra Club, of course, is the leader in that thing. They've really, I think, gone to the point where they oppose everything -- the construction of power plants, the construction of housing. They start in with a negative attitude.

Int: They seem to be on a collision course with the anti-highrise people. If you save all this land, you have to go higher and higher in the air, don't you?

MF: Yes. I think the Sierra Club is against highrise, lowrise, norise, anything. [Laughter] At the moment, at least as I see them, they're against almost anything that's proposed, which is, I guess, a safe position to be in; then you can sort out those things.

I think I read something the other day that Senator Goldwater had resigned from the Sierra Club saying that they weren't interested in anything but their political clout. His reason for that is he had proposed a bill for the extension of the Grand Canyon Park and they had opposed him, I believe, on the basis that it wasn't a big enough extension. He got a little unhappy about that because he thought he'd gotten all that was reasonable. But they said, "No, we're not going to be for your bill because you've got to include even more area," which, for some reason, I guess, he thought was not proper. But I think that puts it in fairly good context. They're a little bit too negative, and if they can't get perfection then they're going to be against the proposal. So they lose a little credibility.

THE TRANSAMERICA BUILDING

Int: You, I think, at one time came out against the Transamerica Pyramid?

MF: Well, a combination of things, yes. In the first place, that involved the abandonment of a street. They built over a street. That came before the Planning Commission and I just felt that we should not, except in extreme urgency, lose a street, because street is open space and street provides for traffic. I don't think any street ought to be closed unless there's no other way to do the job. Here, obviously, there was. There are plenty of other places they could have put the building.

We also had a rule that was sort of a loose one that in that particular area, immediately adjacent to Jackson Square -- the area

MF: was called the Portsmouth Corridor -- there should be no building over about 300 feet, which is a pretty good high building. This one is over 600 feet. My feeling was that just the tremendous bulk of the building at ground level would have a bad effect on Jackson Square.

We had a plan, the city plan, that the higher buildings should be clustered around Market Street and, as you went north and south, they should descend so that you have a transition into the areas like Jackson Square and North Beach. To put that particular really big building right there was a poor choice, plus the fact that architecturally I didn't like the pyramid. I thought it was a silly looking building. But that really wasn't the major issue. The major issue was that Transamerica wanted to build a big office building and that was the wrong place to build it.

Actually, it was purely an accident. The only reason they built it there was that it was across the street from where their present office was and they looked at it, and they needed some empty land, and they bought it. It wasn't really planned. A building of that size and structure should have been built closer to Market Street, because our whole design is that Market Street is there where BART transportation is, where there's an opportunity for people to move without using automobiles. That's why we spent all this money to beautify Market Street and to build BART. High density buildings should be close and this is quite a ways away from Market Street.

Int: Do you think that it and the few others going up around will spark a real highrise revolt?

MF: Well, I don't think anybody's going to build any big buildings over on Jackson Street any more.

Int: I mean, you don't think that, for instance, the opposition to the completion of the Golden Gateway area buildings is a part of a general revolt against highrises?

MF: No. I think that's a specific thing by a few people up on Telegraph Hill that think they're going to have their views cut off. That's the main thrust of that opposition.

We do now have height limits established since the Transamerica Building. We do have specific height limits, and that building could not be built under today's height limits.

Int: The height limits certainly were hewn out by the hardest by Mr. Allan Jacobs. That must have been a tremendous, tremendous task.

MF: Well, it was a job, actually a block-by-block survey of the whole city of San Francisco to establish specific height limits. Then there were changes after the original plan and compromises, and now we have it.

As I say, under the present height limit -- I don't know what the height limit is at that particular place, but it's a good deal less than the size of the Transamerica Building. In fact, we have 700 feet, I think, as the maximum, and that's just on Market Street and within a block or so each way. Then it goes down, both to the north and the south. I think it would be probably less than 300 feet there now.

I remember talking to Mr. [John R.] Beckett, who was the president of Transamerica. Mr. Jacobs and I went to see him (I was president of the Commission) to try and persuade him to reconsider. We got the courtesy of saying he'd reconsider it, but he didn't very much because the model was there. It had been presented to his board.

I remember discussing it with him and I said, "Well, Jack, why do you want to do this thing?" He said, "Well, I've had a success in San Francisco. I want to do something nice for San Francisco. I consider it --" I think he used the term "-- giving them a valentine." He thought that this was making a great contribution. I said, "Well, you may feel that way, but many people don't. They think you could do something much nicer, like building them, maybe, a very small building, a very elaborate building, a very unusually high quality architecture building." But I think at the time we discussed it with him he had already made up his mind that this was going to be it, because it certainly is the most unusual building in the United States.

Another little anecdote about that thing -- I met him, Mr. Beckett, in Paris after the controversy or the discussion. We were in the same hotel. He was coming, or I was coming and he was going. I said, "What are you over here to do, Jack? Going to buy the Eiffel Tower and move it to San Francisco?" He said, "Well, if I could, I would. I think it's a great building. I'd like to have it in San Francisco." [Laughter]

Int: He likes them that shape! [Laughter]

MF: Yes! I don't know whether I was kidding him or he was kidding me.

[Interruption by a visit from Mr. Cahill.]

Int: You were telling about your good try...

MF: Over on the Transamerica Building. No, we didn't get very far. But it isn't the end of the world. A lot of people like it very much. Particularly if you're over across the Bay, it looks pretty good. The further away you get, the better it looks. [Laughter] I can see it way out on Pacific Heights.

My main objection to the building is that I've always had the feeling that the best kind of architecture and the most lasting buildings are those that are functional, that are designed for a purpose. And this, to me, is just the opposite. This is a non-functional building. It's a sort of an architect's gimmick, to build a pyramid. Really, in this day and age we don't have to prove we can build a pyramid because the Egyptians did it a long time ago.

There was a functional reason for building the pyramids. They wanted a big, high building. The only way you could build a big, high building was to build a pyramid. They didn't have steel or concrete and you could get it bigger by having a big base. Today you can build all kinds of things with steel and concrete.

So I think there's something wrong about designing a shape and then putting a building into it because nobody else has one just like it.

Int: The Bank of America, then, you feel, is --

MF: I don't consider that's in the same class. I mean, that's a straightforward, functional building. It works very well. It has maximum utilization. It has some features in there like this bay window, which is typical of San Francisco. It's pretty big and it would be better, maybe, if it wasn't quite so big. As we see it today, it's a little too dark, although when you look at the individual pieces of stone in small scale they're not really dark. They're quite rich. But that amount of it at certain times of day with a certain light does look like a dark building.

I hate to compare the two buildings. To me, one's a very fine building and the Transamerica is a funny looking thing. It doesn't even look like a pyramid. At the ground level it's really a funny looking thing. I mean, it occupies a whole block and it's got all this bracing. When you go inside, the elevator arrangements are quite peculiar. It's a funny kind of a thing.

CITY PLANNERS AND PLANNING

Int: Was Mr. Jacobs city planner when you were named to the board?

MF: Yes, he was. He had been there about a year, and I was involved in his selection, partly so. Well, I was involved with his selection on another basis, if you want to take another minute or so.

When I was the president of SPUR, there were a lot of people on the SPUR executive committee and the staff who were very displeased with the then director, Jim McCarthy. They didn't think he was doing a very good job. On many occasions, he seemed to have failed to do the right kind of thing, to be energetic. He sort of was going along with the tide and wasn't attracting a very good staff of imaginative people. In other words, their whole department was sort of going down hill because Jim McCarthy, although a very nice guy, was not a very strong character and didn't stick out his neck very much.

I've forgotten who were involved, but I know Mr. [John E.] Hirten, who was the executive director of SPUR, got the executive committee to decide that we should go as SPUR and request the mayor to get a new director of planning. Everybody thought that was a great idea. But then they sat around wondering who was going to go and see the mayor and what were they going to tell him.

Anyway, I finally got the job and went out there with two or three other people. We sat down in the mayor's office and sort of fenced around a little bit and talked about the weather and planning. Finally I decided we'd better get at it and I said, "Mr. Mayor, we've come here to tell you that we think you should get a new director of planning."

He was very shocked at the thought and asked what was the matter. We gave some specifications and some reasons for it. He said, "Well, of course, I'll have to think about that. I guess he thought about it, but we didn't hear from him. So some weeks went by.

I think we told him, "We would like you to do this if you can in some manner that will make it easy for him to resign and there won't be any public scandal. But the SPUR Executive Committee has decided that whether you do or not we are going to take a public position on this, but we'd rather not do it."

MF: So I was being pressed by the members of the Executive Committee and Mr. Hirten, after several weeks went by, to get in touch with the mayor. So I called him up and said, "What are you doing about it?" He said, "Well, I'm thinking about it." I said, "You know, our understanding was that you would think about it for a couple of weeks, but if we didn't get an affirmative answer, we would do something about it. We think we shouldn't do that, so we'll hold off a while."

Then another few days went by and he called me. He said, "You can call off your hounds. Mr. McCarthy is going to resign for reasons of health." So, he did resign.

Int: Actually for reasons of health?

MF: I'm not sure about the health thing. I think the fact that the mayor may have told him that he was in some difficulty with the community may have affected his health. I was really sort of sorry about the whole thing. It's not a very nice job to have to go ask for his resignation. He was a perfectly nice guy. Nobody had anything against him, but he wasn't a very good director.

So then I was involved in helping to find other people, but I wasn't on the Planning Commission. The commission themselves did search other people, but I know I met Mr. Jacobs among others who came out here on a visit. He had a good reputation and was quite the opposite of Jim McCarthy. I mean, Jim McCarthy was, I think, quite popular and I don't know if Allan Jacobs is popular with everybody. But you can't do a tough job and be popular with everybody.

Int: Anybody who sees him at one of those meetings certainly has to be sympathetic with him because he certainly looks as if he's working hard and earnestly.

MF: He's very earnest and he works very hard. He goes out and spends a lot of time with neighborhood groups and exposes himself to criticism and doesn't duck the issues.

Int: Are you pretty much at one with his philosophy of planning?

MF: I think in general, yes, in his over-all philosophy. I have many occasions to discuss my philosophy with him and we have a good interchange. In some specifics I may disagree with him. I don't always vote for the recommendation of the director, but in general I do, and I think he's doing a good job. I think San Francisco has benefited by his being here.

MF: He has attracted some very intelligent, capable people to his staff, quite the contrary of what was happening before. I think young people in the planning field like to work for a director that's doing things, that's on the cutting edge in innovative concepts. And then also, San Francisco is again a very favored city. It's the kind of place where planners feel things can be done. It's not a hopeless situation and they like to come and contribute something to it, to a cause where you can see some results, and I think we see some good results. I hope there are more.

We're just engaged this last week -- and I think this is somewhat at my urging -- we are going to undertake a complete study of all residential zoning in the city of San Francisco to rethink the thing because the present zoning is 1960 vintage. This will be a two-year job, probably, to see whether we should change our qualifications for single families or multiple families or apartment houses, whether the present provisions are in tune with the demands and the necessities of today. This is a job that most cities do about every twenty years.

Int: There's been some pressure for down-zoning?

MF: This study that I referred to is somewhat a result of that and that's on a piecemeal basis. I feel, and Mr. Jacobs and his staff feel, that that's not the way to do it. We should take a look at the whole city before we start making a lot of little changes here and there.

We may decide that the city should have some down-zoning and maybe some -- I'm anticipating the study -- up-zoning to counteract so we don't have a reduction of total dwelling units. Maybe the growth is not in the right places and neither is the down-zoning, which is the opposite of that, of restricting growth. It's sort of on an ad hoc basis; a group of people get together and say, "We want our area reduced in density." But I think we have to look at it from the over-all city point of view, where these changes should take place. We have to be responsive to the desires of the people who live and own property there, but they don't quite see it the same way as we should be looking at it, which is on an over-all basis. They're only going to look at what's happening on their block and that's quite natural.

Otherwise you wouldn't really need a Planning Department. You'd just have an election every year and everybody would decide how they want their block zoned. It'd be a rather poor looking city, I think.

MF: So have we run out of space?

Int: I have a couple more things to ask you. Could you give us a few minutes more?

MF: Sure, sure.

Int: First, I should wind up the planning. Do you have any general statement you want to make more about its goals in the future or the way San Francisco seems headed?

MF: Well, I think San Francisco is certainly a very vital city and it's a dynamic city. By that I mean that things are going on. It certainly hasn't leveled off and it hasn't stopped changing. I think we have to accept, and I would like to accept, that a city, any city and particularly this city, is always going to change.

Change doesn't necessarily mean growth or reduction in size and I think people are inclined to confuse it with growth. I don't think we necessarily have to have infinite growth in order to have desirable change. But it is certainly a city that is changing at an accelerated pace. There is more change today, I think, than I have seen for many, many years. There's more protest against change and more problems that result.

In other words, cities used to just sort of develop pretty much by themselves with a little direction. But I think the degree of direction is more necessary now because the problems of living in cities are much more complex than they were before. It can't just take care of itself. On the other hand, I think to have very rigid rules for growth or no growth is not desirable. There have to be some general guidelines and then within that you have to let the private enterprise system sort of take over and work its way out. I don't think you can have a dictatorial system.

But many people feel that -- that there should be a strong control, that the city ought to say to everybody, "You can build this and you can't build that and I don't like that color building."

There have been massive quick changes that were very disruptive. It has to be sort of an evolutionary process. Having a system whereby everything is decided by city government just doesn't work in the United States of America. That would discourage people from even contemplating anything in San Francisco in the way of building.

Often people say to me, "You're on the Planning Commission. Why did you let them build that building?", which they, the speaker,

MF: doesn't like. We just don't have that kind of a system that the Planning Commission decides on every building. We'll have some ugly buildings because that's a subjective term. The man that's building it thinks it's beautiful or he wouldn't be building it.

I don't think we've arrived at the point where we can agree that even the majority's taste should always prevail. Minorities have minority rights, and I guess they have minority rights to build ugly buildings. It's pretty hard to contemplate the opposite of how you would ever arrive at a standard of what's nice or what's desirable.

Int: Especially when, as you pointed out, tastes change.

MF: Yes. I see people walking around with clothes that I think are pretty horrible, but they must like them or they wouldn't be wearing them. I don't think I have the right to go up and say, "You've got to go and --." I don't know what department of city would be involved in that. But there's some correlation between a building and other styles and other tastes.

Int: So it's a democratic process.

MF: I think it has to be, with a certain amount of restriction. I think the real key is that you have to have sufficient controls to prevent really drastic change that is irreversible and that is really going to, in the long run, damage the whole structure of the city. Some people probably think the Bank of America is just that bad and the Transamerica, that those two buildings have ruined the city of San Francisco. I don't think it's quite that bad, however, I don't think they've ruined it. But, of course, if you had a hundred buildings like that, I guess you could say the city would be rather disastrous from our present point of view.

Int: It's wonderful that people dedicate themselves to keeping the balance.

MF: Well, the citizenry of this city are very alert of that. Just for an example, many people are rather proud of and think that the western part of San Francisco, the Richmond and the Sunset districts, is a rather nice part of the city. But I can remember when those were all sand dunes and practically all the buildings that were put up out there were put up by what are now called developers or speculative builders. A lot of people didn't like that at all when it was going up. They liked the old sand dunes. A lot of those houses were considered very poor, but now people live there and they rather like them. I guess they do.

Int: They all cut off each other's views.

MF: That's right. They look out and see only the other side of the street.

It's a very difficult thing to say what's right and wrong. You just have to keep working at it. Certainly, I'm sure the city will change as much in the next fifty years as it has in the last fifty years. I don't mean necessarily grow as much, but it will change. You can't really go back to the old old days, which weren't necessarily very good anyway.

MRS. LEON SLOSS AND MRS. MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER

Int: I'd like to ask you about your sister and your wife who I know has been very active in a great many things. Will you just say a few things about them both?

MF: My sister and I, I think, have a good relationship in that we see each other not too frequently. She has her sphere of interests and I have mine, but we're always in close touch with each other. We were the only two children in the family. I don't think we've been that close in the last many years, but certainly as children we were fairly close. She has a lot of civic interests. She has been interested in Mills College. She was president of the Alumnae Association over there at one time. She's been interested in philanthropic and charitable projects.

She has one son who works for the State Department and who's achieved quite a degree of success, and a daughter who's been involved in political affairs; she worked for Governor [Edmund G.] Brown at one time as appointments secretary and has been and still is involved in political affairs. Then her younger son is a lawyer here in San Francisco. He's a very bright young man. I admire all three of them very much.

As far as my wife is concerned, we've been married for a few years. We have a lot of common interests and we try not to get in each other's way. [Laughter] What's her thing is hers and what's mine is mine, but I don't do many things without discussing it with her and vice versa.

Int: What have her main activities been? You mentioned that she was active in the Red Cross.

MF: Well, that was during the war. In recent years, she's been very active in the Campfire Girls of America. She served as president for three years and is now still on the board and is the chairman or co-chairman of a study committee. They're involved in the self-study of their whole program nationally. During her three years as president, she traveled a great deal. They had meetings all over the country and I think she did an excellent job. I didn't go to most of these meetings because I didn't think it was proper, although I did know what was going on behind the scenes.

She's been active in the International Hospitality Center in San Francisco and chairman of a small committee there which is involved in hospitality of a special kind for the wives of consuls and consul generals. In other words, the procedure is that she has a group of younger people and when the consul general of whatever country it is arrives, this group of ladies get in touch with her immediately -- they're assigned sometimes on the basis of their linguistic ability -- and say, "What can we do to help you? Do you have a problem about where to shop and where to send your children to school and what kind of housing you may need? -- all the little things that a wife arriving from overseas might need. It's been very, very successful and she's gotten a lot of letters of commendation.

So, that and our other activities, the International Hospitality Center and my connection with the World Affairs Council, have kept us very much in touch with the consular corps, which is quite an important thing. But I think this little committee I mentioned is unusual, and they certainly appreciate it because some of these wives are young and inexperienced. It may be their first overseas post and all of a sudden here they are in San Francisco. They don't speak the language very well, they don't understand the customs, and somebody of their age or approximately their age comes to their house and says, "What can we do to help you?" and they have a whole list of things to suggest. As I say, that's with the International Hospitality Center.

She's been active in the art world. She served at one time on the Women's Board of the San Francisco Museum of Art for quite a few years. She's been on the Women's Committee of the San Francisco Symphony. She's shared with me my interest in the Asia Foundation. I've mentioned these many trips we've made. She's accompanied me and contributed quite a little bit in meeting people overseas.

She keeps herself occupied with a variety of things, her family, and her friends. She keeps up a very active correspondence

MF: with friends all over the world. She writes all the letters. I never write any letters. But she has friends of hers that she's known from school. She went to school in Europe and she still keeps in touch. I would say she writes half a dozen letters a week at least overseas. Then when it comes around Christmas time, she sends out I think roughly about 450 Christmas cards and she usually, in many cases, writes a personal note on them. I lick the stamps and the envelopes sometimes. I think we'll have to cut that down because it keeps growing all the time.

She's been involved with taking a course for many years at the Brundage Museum, or I think it's called the Asian Art museum, as a docent. She's not actually taking this for credit, but she audits the course. We have a houseful of Oriental art books and she's become quite an expert on Oriental art, a subject I don't know very much about.

We have a very close family relationship. I think I described that. All of our children and grandchildren live in the same place at Woodside during the summer, and she occupies herself with her children and grandchildren a great deal. We have a fairly active social life and I know she does an excellent job as hostess. We're cutting down a little on that. After you've done it for a long period of time, it isn't quite as interesting as it was. But there aren't very many days during the so-called winter/fall season that we don't have something to do. We're not looking for things to do. We're looking more to doing less things.

Although we have traveled a lot, she feels she'd like to do more leisurely travel. We have a slight debate on that. I like to travel actively and she likes to travel passively, likes to go some place and spend a month. I always say, "Well, that's fine, but let's make it a week," [laughter] and then the week gets to be about five days. But I think we probably will do more of the relaxed travel, although I don't like to travel too much in the summertime because I enjoy staying at our place in Woodside so much.

I would also like to say for the record that my wife's interest in things overseas and her ability to speak foreign languages (she's excellent in French and Italian; she speaks them both as well as English and also speaks Spanish pretty well) have caused me to become more interested in things of a foreign nature that I otherwise would have, because when we travel her ability to speak these languages makes it very pleasant. I'm not very good at it, but I sort of stumble along a couple of steps behind. It's opened up a lot of very interesting areas of the world that otherwise I probably wouldn't have been as much involved in.

(Interview #9 - May 9, 1974)

THE ALASKA SALMON COMPANY, CONTINUED

Int: I was just looking up what you had said earlier about the Alaska Salmon Company,* and I think we somehow broke off before we got onto the history of the final disposition of that company. What happened to it in the end?

MF: Well, I know that it was sold to some other interests, and I believe they were in Seattle. I think I mentioned Mr. Flager, Dixie [Dixon] Flager. He came from Seattle and he took over the management of the company from Mr. Hale. That's C.P. Hale, Elwyn Hale's father. He took it over from C.P. Hale and Mrs. Hale, who was very, very active.

Int: Elwyn died earlier this year.

MF: Oh, did he?

Int: Mrs. Hale is still alive.

MF: She was very active in the business and owned some stock in it. I remember Mrs. Hale. This goes back quite a few years, but this Mr. Flager, who had some experience in the business -- I've forgotten the name of the company he was identified with in the Pacific Northwest -- came in and took the company over and managed it during the years that I was associated with it. Then we sold the company, or he sold the company I believe, and I don't recall whether it was -- I think it was to somebody who was already in that business. It was sort of merged with some others. There were several companies. There was the Alaska Pacific Salmon Company and there was another one that Mr. Baltzer Peterson headed -- there were

*Pp. 57-58

MF: several salmon companies headquartered on the West Coast, most of them in the Seattle area. Eventually it was disposed of and liquidated.

Int: I see. Did that have any relationship in time to the kind of general decline of the salmon packing industry?

MF: Yes, it really did. The business was not as profitable and I guess you might say there were too many people in the business for the amount of fish around [laughter] and it was more practical to consolidate the operations in Bristol Bay. That's where this fishing was done. I don't really know anything about the present status of it, but I know there are not that many independent companies. I think California Packing Company, Del Monte, are involved in it and some other large firms.

Int: There's not that much salmon anymore to be fished for?

MF: No, not as much salmon for the Americans anyway. We have the Russians and the Japanese that seem to be catching most of the fish in the Pacific.

Int: Yes. You said your family connections had kind of led to the purchase of the company. Was that right? The Hales were in San Francisco?

MF: Yes, yes. Oh, yes. C.P. Hale was in San Francisco. Chris Hale was a San Franciscan. I don't know whether Elwyn Hale ever worked with the company or not; I think he did.

Int: He did.

MF: When his father was running it. And Mrs. Hale was very active. She was quite a businesswoman. I do remember that she wanted Elwyn to succeed to the management of the company and the rest of us didn't think Elwyn had anything like his father, who was quite a man. That is one of the reasons when Mr. Hale died or became incapacitated that the owners of the company were looking for another man to run it, and we selected this man from Seattle, Mr. Flager. I don't remember if his name was spelled with a "Ph" or an "F."

Int: Did you maintain the headquarters here then or did he stay up there?

MF: No, it was moved up to Seattle, I think.

Int: I suppose it's hard, speaking of Elwyn, to be the son of a very forceful father and a very forceful mother.

MF: Yes, I think it was.

Int: Well, thank you for clearing that up.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CONTINUED

Int: Then we didn't bring USF up to date.* I have a clipping from the San Francisco Chronicle of October 1, 1973. There's been a reorganization --

MF: A reorganization of the board of regents in a sense, and I've become the chairman of the board of regents. There is also a board of trustees, and the latter is the actual governing body of the university, the trustees, which formerly -- I believe I may have touched on this before -- was entirely composed of members of the Jesuit Order. Then a few years ago that pattern was changed and they have now a by-law that provides that, I think, one more than half of the board of trustees will be Jesuits; the others will be selected from the community. I've also been elected to the trustees. This is an attempt to link the regents with the trustees, with possibly the hope that at some time in the future the two bodies would be merged.

But the board of regents was started maybe fifteen years ago to represent the community to the university and to represent the university to the community, and the regents have been businessmen and people not necessarily either Catholics or alumni. It became a rather dormant body, the regents. There was this problem that some of the members of the board of regents felt, "Well, we're more or less of an inactive body. We're not the decision-making body, but nevertheless we're supposed to interpret the university to the public." There was some disaffection, there was some unhappiness, and quite a few of the members of the board resigned.

Then I was asked to come on as the chairman to sort of reactivate it and we've been reasonably successful. We now have some new regents and some of the old regents. We have two women on the board. I hope that we can have more. We have some younger people. It's an attempt to revitalize the organization.

Int: Does it have anything to do with the general plan for the university?

*See pp. 196-197.

MF: In a way, yes. We have some joint committees of the trustees and the regents. This is an attempt to eventually bring the two organizations together. The regents concern themselves more with the financial aspects of the university, but of course in order to do that they have to know a little about why the money is necessary and what it's being spent for. So, in a way that doesn't bring these two organizations, the two boards, into a conflict, we are attempting to have joint committees working together on investments and on future planning and on physical planning. The regents have not yet gotten into the, you might say, curricula activites, but it's hoped that they will even do that.

It's a matter of reorganization in the sense that each organization, the trustees and the regents, has a little clearer role, where they conflict and where they don't. Where they don't have to conflict, they can go their own ways, but it really is an attempt to eventually merge the two boards.

Int: Is the university planning to grow or just get better?

MF: I think it's pretty stable. Physically it has most of the buildings it needs. It's had quite a big building program. Most of the buildings out there are relatively new. There's a new building being dedicated this week, McLaren Hall, which was a gift of the Irvine Foundation, and Mr. McLaren, N. Loyall McLaren, who is a regent* -- it's named in his honor because he's also a trustee of the Irvine Foundation. And then there's a Cowell Building, which was a gift of the Cowell Foundation. There's a Harney Building there, which was a gift of the Harney family. These are all fairly new and the University Center is new. Of course you're familiar with the Gleeson Library and their library activities.

To answer your question, the attempt is to more or less stabilize the number of students. It is a private university. They get most of their income from tuition. Tuition has to go up a little every year. It makes students a little unhappy, but at the same time we're working and have been somewhat successful on obtaining money for scholarships and also loan funds to help these students.

*N. Loyall McLaren served on the board of regents from 1959 until 1974.

SAN FRANCISCO AS A FINANCIAL CENTER

- Int: Some years ago a newspaper reporter here said to me, "San Francisco's conservatism comes in part from the fact that a great deal of money of the city is held by family trusts which administer the funds for the benefit of people who are not venturesome and simply wish to continue an income; they are managed by conservative men." Does that sound reasonable to you?
- MF: I don't really think that is a big element. I don't think of many family trusts, where instead of passing the money on from father to son or grandchildren it's been put in trust for future generations, that that's been a very big influence.
- Int: It wasn't at one time more than now?
- MF: Not as I recall it. I really don't think so. I think this would be more true of cities like Boston and New York and maybe even Philadelphia. But I don't think so. I think most of the money of the, we say, the people who made the "old money," as you used that term, some of it may have been put into trust. I'm thinking of the Crocker family. There has been a charitable trust in their family which goes 'way back to three generations, but a good part of the family wealth has gone from father to son to grandson or daughter. I don't really think that is really a fair appraisal of the San Francisco situation. And there's always new money too. I mean, it's not all the old money. There's a lot of new money. It's not that kind of a dead institution where there isn't new money. There are new fortunes made, and new people arrive on the scene that are important in the business affairs and the civic affairs.
- Int: Are the new fortunes made in San Francisco or do they come from elsewhere?
- MF: Well, it's sort of a variety. I think a lot of people have moved here with money from other parts of the country, and I suppose there have been a few new fortunes. It all depends on how new is "new." Some place else in here we were talking about Mr. Louis Lurie. Well, I guess he would be new in the history of San Francisco.
- Int: One generation, I suppose, is new.
- MF: Yes. I mean, he wasn't a descendent of the Gold Rush families, and he became a very wealthy man and had big investments, and there have been other people in the real estate business. San Francisco is

MF: becoming less isolated. It's more of a corporate city, and I think a good deal of concentration is in corporations, which are either local or national. But as far as talking about the family wealth -- well, again, it's how new is "new."

There are probably not as many new fortunes being built here as in Los Angeles. I guess you might say there are some old family names around there still, but there are an awful lot of new ones, and some of them go up and go down too. There's more stability in San Francisco. We haven't as many bankruptcies or excitements.

Int: San Francisco used to be called the financial center of the West. I guess it still is, isn't it?

MF: Well, I think it still is. It's still the headquarters of, for example, the Bank of America, which is the world's biggest bank. The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, which is one of the major insurance companies, is headquartered here. There are a lot of branch offices. But in the banking business it is certainly one of the leading cities in the United States. There are a lot of bank headquarters here. The Wells Fargo Bank and the Crocker Bank are not that big, but they're pretty big banks. And insurance -- there's not so much other than the Fireman's Fund. Del Monte Corporation is headquartered here, which is a world-wide corporation. Bechtel Corporation, which is certainly world-wide -- and, incidentally, you might put that in the category of relatively new fortunes. It's second-generation and it's the biggest company of its kind, I believe, in the world, and it's headquartered here. I just read that Mr. [George P.] Schultz, the former Secretary of Treasury, is joining the Bechtel Corporation. I can't think of all of them, but there are quite a few. Kaiser is another world-wide company which is headquartered in the Bay Area here and that's also a relatively new capital formation family. There are probably others.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

Int: Going back to earlier families, I've realized that when we've been discussing your father's associates and your early associates that there were some we hadn't discussed. I don't know if you knew them or not. For instance, William Randolph Hearst. We were saying that San Francisco was a fairly small community. Did your family know and were you all friends of Hearst's?

MF: My uncle was a particular close friend of William Randolph Heart's. Herbert Fleishhacker and William Randolph were very close friends. My father knew him, but not that well. I've known some of the second generation, but not intimately. But I did know them and have known them all. And the Knowlands, another publishing family. I knew Mr. Knowland.

Int: Senior?

MF: Senior. My father was quite friendly with Joe [Joseph R.] Knowland, the original.

Int: Did he have political interests in common with him?

MF: No, I think their interests were more in civic activities. Mr. Knowland was very active in the formation of, I think, the Community Chest in Oakland. He was one of the early founders of it and interested in it. And I knew the senator [William R. Knowland] who died recently. I don't know the other brother.

Int: Did you have affairs in common?

MF: Oh, as far as Mr. Joseph Knowland, I got to know him -- of course, he was quite a bit older than I, between myself and my father -- I met him when we used to have United Crusade meetings, when the Oakland Chest and the San Francisco Chest were coming together. He was quite active in that. Then his son later was also active, and I got to know him in that connection.

Int: The same with Paul Shoup of Southern Pacific. Did you know him?

MF: Paul Shoup, yes. He was a good friend of both my uncle's and my father's and director of the Anglo-California Bank, I believe. Yes, the Anglo Bank.

Int: What was your impression of him?

MF: Paul Shoup?

Int: Yes.

MF: It's hard to say an impression. He was a very kindly man, a very nice man; I would say not a dynamic man, but a very solid citizen and quite important in California affairs. He was on quite a few boards. He was one of these men that served on several other boards in addition to the Southern Pacific. Of course, Southern Pacific was always one of our biggest things in San Francisco.

MF: Talking about corporate headquarters, that is one -- they go all the way from here to New Orleans and practically east to Chicago. That has continued to be one of the major corporate activities in San Francisco and, I guess, one of the largest employers.

I knew Mr. Shoup and I knew some of the other people. One of the presidents of the Southern Pacific was Angus MacDonald. He came along somewhat later. And then in recent years Don [Donald J.] Russell, who just retired, and his successor, Ben Biagini -- I've known them all, Ben Biagini and Don Russell better than the others because we're a little closer to the same age.

Int: Did you notice anything they had in common, all the presidents of the Southern Pacific?

MF: Well, no. They differed, I would say. I think Mr. Don Russell, who just retired a few years ago, was probably the outstanding one because during his long period of management -- and he was really the manager; he ran that company -- the Southern Pacific got its affairs in very good shape. They are probably one of the best and most successful railroads in the United States. They don't have any problems like Penn Central. In the early days, like a lot of railroads, they did go through financial reorganization. But Don Russell, I would say, gets a lot of credit for building this into a real solid institution, getting out of the passenger business, getting into the freight business, going into the trucking business, because they operate a lot of trucks, and the pipeline business -- they have an oil pipeline -- and diversifying and really making it a first class railroad. His successor, Ben Biagini, has carried on.

During that period of these two men the railroad went from a sort of a second class railroad, or maybe at least not a real top one, into a strong financial position and grew in size; it acquired other railroads, and I think it is one of the biggest in the country in the matter of amount of freight it carries and the number of miles it operates. That was, I would say, a factor of management. They had good territory, but still they took full advantage of the territory that they serve.

Int: Paul Shoup was president, I think, briefly only. Was he kind of a victim of the Depression?

MF: I guess that could be a fact, yes. The railroads really suffered during the Depression. They all did. But the financial structure of all railroads was a large amount of bonds. They issued bonds

MF: like they were going out of style. So, when the crunch came, you say, they had financial problems. They had a high ratio of bonds to stock. That was the traditional nature of railroad financing; railroad bonds in their day were really one of the prime triple-A investments. They were bought by trusts and banks.

Int: They were what Stanford University held heavily.

MF: Organizations like Stanford did not go into common stocks, and these railroad bonds were very good when they were very good, and when they got bad they were pretty horrid. I mean, there were lots of defaults and many reorganizations, which is still going on. You know, we hear about the whole reorganization of the Northeast section, and they have sick railroads like the New Haven has always been sick, and the Erie Railroad at one time was not only sick but it was sort of a vaudeville joke. And the Wabash. There were attempts to merge them, and this had been going on as long as I can remember, to try and reorganize the railroads so that they make some sense.

Int: I should have asked you, while we were talking about Hearst, about the de Young family. Were you also friends with the de Youngs?

MF: Yes, with the de Young family, but more with the de Young sisters, of which Mrs. [Nion R.] Tucker is the only surviving one. But I knew Mrs. Tucker. In fact, my mother knew some of the older sisters, Mrs. [George T.] Cameron and Mrs. [Ferdinand] Thieriot. There was a reasonably -- well, I would say not a very close association, but I've certainly known them all, and the younger generation.

PAUL SMITH

Int: When you knew newspaper publishing families, did you know anything more about the newspapers they published than if you hadn't been acquainted with them?

MF: Well, I think the answer is I didn't know any more. The only connection I might have had that was with the newspaper business was the close association I had with Paul Smith, who was at one time the editor of the Chronicle and was a protege of George Cameron, who was married to one of the de Youngs. I knew Paul Smith very well when he started in as a young man. As a matter of fact, one of the first jobs he had in San Francisco was working for the Anglo Bank, the Anglo-California Trust Company, at the time

MF: I was there; he was a bond trader. He came to San Francisco as a very young man. Of course, he was a very young man all his active life. He was always about ten, fifteen, or twenty years younger than most of his colleagues.

I knew Paul in his very sad, you might say, rise and decline. I knew him, and he left the bank to go to work for the Chronicle. As a matter of fact, he was quite a brilliant bond trader, and this office that the Anglo-California Trust Company had in New York, with which I was associated for some time -- Paul was sent back to New York after I came out here, after I was married a year or so, and I remember going back to New York with Paul. Mrs. Fleishhacker and I went back there, and he had never been to New York I don't think. I went downtown and introduced him to some of the people that I had gotten to know there and got him set up. He didn't stay there too long. He had this -- well, his career speaks for itself. He was very closely associated with Mr. Herbert Hoover for some time.

Int: How was he associated?

MF: Well, Mr. Hoover sort of took him up as a protege. He found him a very bright young man.

Int: There in New York?

MF: I've forgotten whether it was after Paul was in New York. It may have been. He was in and out. And then -- I'm jumping because I don't remember. Of course, he's written his own book, which is quite an interesting book, and I haven't read it recently.* But Mr. Hoover thought very highly of him and he worked with Mr. Hoover and traveled with him and helped him in speechwriting and things of that kind.

Then he went to work for the Chronicle. No, I think he had been at work with the Chronicle after he left the bank as a financial writer. He wrote for the financial page. He wrote rather well. The financial editor of the Chronicle died and I believe at that time Paul was in Europe, either working for the Chronicle or working with Mr. Hoover on leave, and they called him back and made him financial editor. That really got him

*Personal File; Appleton-Century, 1964.

MF: started in the newspaper. He went from financial editor up the ladder.

He brought a lot of bright young men into the Chronicle, some of whom are still there. Sidney Allen, who is the financial editor, was a man that Paul chose. I think Royce Brier and, of course, Scotty [Scott] Newhall. Paul went right to the top. The only problem he had was the Chronicle got to be a great newspaper, but it didn't make any money because Paul was spending lots of money investing in the future of it. Paul was -- well, I speak of him with "was"; he's still alive, but he's been in the Veterans Hospital for many years. He suffered some very peculiar illnesses and he collapsed.

Where was I? But anyway, he made a great newspaper and they got all kinds of acclaim from the journalistic society, but didn't make any money. There was some dissatisfaction in the family, who, to a large degree, relied on the Chronicle's dividends or earnings, and he left due to the fact that the finances were not really very good. Then he went to work for Collier's Magazine New York and that failed and at that time Paul was already in bad health. But I had a close association with him for many years, and he was a brilliant man.

Int: He was an intellectual, was he?

MF: Well, no. Paul was not an intellectual. I don't think he ever went to college. I'm pretty sure he never did. He was very bright, inquiring, innovative, forceful. I just really don't know how you could describe him.

Int: He must have been imaginative.

MF: Very imaginative and quite daring and, being young, maybe he had the advantage of youth that he would try things that older people said, "Well, you can't do that because it's been tried and didn't work." He would do things.

Int: Do you think that if he had been allowed to continue with the Chronicle, it would have finally made money?

MF: No, I don't think so because the one thing Paul had absolutely no sense of was the value of money. In his personal affairs, if he had any money he spent it, and if he could borrow any money he'd borrow it and spend that too without very much thought of how and by what means he was going to pay it back.

Int: But still he was a good financial editor?

MF: He could write about other people's finances, but he didn't have any sense of financial stability or understanding of the value of a dollar. I think that was probably, I'd say, his downfall in that field, although a very, very attractive guy and very, very nice.

Int: Well, that's interesting. I'm glad we happened upon him.

MF: Yes. I'd forgotten all about Paul Smith. As a matter of fact, I think I'll have to end this interview by saying, "Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera," because there are about, you know, at least a dozen other activities of more or less importance that I -- as I read that through* I think of minor things that are connected. But I think you got most of the major things.

WARTIME NAVY SERVICE

Int: Do some others come to mind now?

MF: Well, there's one thing that maybe you would like to touch on. I don't think any place in the manuscript there's any reference to the three and a half years I spent in the Navy.

Int: Only brief reference.**

MF: I went in the Navy in July of 1942 and left the Navy, I think it was, in October of '45. So, it was a fairly long period of my life in one field. I must say it was a very, very interesting and, I think, I could almost say a rewarding experience, although war is supposed to be a horrible thing. I wasn't in the war in the sense that I was in the front lines getting shot at or anything, and I was more or less in a pretty safe situation practically all the time. But was overseas for -- well, to take it in chronological order, I enlisted or I joined the Navy, got a commission --

Int: What was your rank?

*The transcript of the previous interview sessions.

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MF: I started in as a lieutenant junior grade and ended up one grade higher. I was a little over age. I had hoped to get a commission as a lieutenant, but I didn't. My age would have qualified me, but at the time I applied here in San Francisco there had been a scandal about giving out commissions and the man who was in that position later was displaced. I thought I got caught in the backwash of that, because he'd been handing them out a little bit too freely and maybe too high a rank, so there was investigation going on. Anyway, I did get a commission and then went to Chicago to sort of an officers' training school at Tower Hall -- not the Great Lakes Naval Station, but Tower Hall, which is right near the water tower on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago. I spent a couple of months there learning how to be a naval officer -- one of those remarkable things that happened in World War II and other wars, where you took a civilian and made him a naval officer in a couple of months. At that time you had a sort of a provisional commission. If you graduated, then you actually got the commission. Everybody graduated with few exceptions because they needed these officers.

Then I was assigned to a ship and everything was very secret. We had been indoctrinated with the idea that never tell anything about anything. So I told my wife the name of the ship; the orders merely gave the name of the ship but didn't say where it was. But I was supposed to come here to the Twelfth Naval District and find out where it was.

Int: What was the ship?

MF: It was called the U.S.S. Otus, which was a submarine tender. I had two weeks leave, I think, before reporting, and I wasn't in a hurry to go and find out where it was. After I'd been here a while I found that the ship was up at Mare Island, believe it or not. The only thing I knew was that the orders showed that it was part of the Seventh Fleet, so I assumed that it was out there with the Seventh Fleet, but I found that it was here up at Mare Island. The ship had been out in the Pacific. It came back here and was undergoing conversion, or reconversion. It was originally a merchant ship. It had been converted to a submarine tender and was being reconverted for better use. Actually, that was in about maybe September and the ship didn't leave here until January, so I had a period of time when I was home part of the time. I had to spend most of the time at Mare Island. We couldn't live on the ship because it was all torn up, so we had bachelor officers' quarters on shore there and I commuted back and forth from here to Mare Island, oh, once or twice a week and would spend most of the time there.

MF: Part of the time that January the ship was undergoing trials, and we were in the Bay and we went out a couple of times on the ocean. Then we left here for Australia by way of Pearl Harbor in January, and then we got eventually out to the west coast of Australia. We spent some months there on the ship and then the ship was brought back around Australia and we went up to New Guinea. It was a submarine tender, so it just sort of stayed in one place and ships came along and were serviced.

Between the time we left the west coast of Australia and went to New Guinea, the ship's classification was changed from a submarine tender to a sort of a miscellaneous tender because the ship was never really properly built to take care of submarines. There were several others specially built, but this one was not.

Int: What was your function?

MF: Well, that was sort of an amusing story. When I arrived up at Mare Island I first reported to the captain, there were several other younger officers. After a day or so, he called two of us in. He said, "Now, I need two officers on here, a junior communications officer and a junior gunnery officer. Do either of you know anything about communications or gunnery?" And I think we both said, "No," or, "Not very much." [Laughter] This other fellow was younger than I, but he'd had about two months training. So the captain said, "I guess we'll have to flip a coin to see which one gets to be assistant gunnery officer and assistant communications officer." I got to be the assistant communications officer, and then I did learn.

We were here, and I worked at the Mare Island communications headquarters and learned something about what I was supposed to know and read a lot of books on it, so that by the time we got underway I did know a little about it. I stayed in that specialty through the whole time. Once you get tagged with something you sort of stay there.

Then, later, after the ship was in New Guinea, I was getting a little bored, having been on the ship for about a year, and there wasn't really very much to do because it just sort of sat there. There were general administrative jobs. I qualified as a deck officer, so I stood watches when we were underway, and administrative work. I asked, really at the suggestion of the captain, for a reassignment to the Seventh Fleet headquarters, which was much more interesting. So I was eventually transferred back down to Brisbane, where the Seventh Fleet had its headquarters, and I spent some time there, I guess the best part of a year -- well, no, no, about nine

MF: months -- during which time I also made a trip up to Darwin to do a special study about the construction of a radio station there and then made a report on that.

I got eventually into much more interesting work, which was planning for various movements up until General MacArthur and the Seventh Fleet went up to Leyte Gulf. When the headquarters moved from Brisbane up to an interim place for the take-off for that Philippine invasion, I had been there for quite a while. In fact, I had been out in the area longer than anybody else on the staff and so I had the option of going along and seeing some action or coming home, and I took the latter and came home. I sort of stayed there and closed up the Brisbane headquarters. They'd moved up to Hollandia, which was in New Guinea.

This was interesting: the Seventh Fleet was part of the Southwest Pacific area, and the principal officer was General MacArthur. In some areas the Navy and Army, they always cooperated, but in this area this was what was known as General MacArthur's Navy. It was sort of a stepchild. It was a stepchild because General MacArthur was a general and not too interested in the Navy except as an auxiliary thing.

So then I came back to San Francisco in September of '44. Then I was assigned to the Federal Building here, which was the Western Sea Frontier Office, also in communications, and stayed there till I was discharged or separated.

Int: The services seem to have made good use of your talent for making reports and investigations.

MF: Well, they did. I think in general people sort of found their proper slot, although it wasn't always true. I mean, for example, there were two officers' training schools. One was here in San Francisco and the other was in Chicago. Though living in San Francisco I was sent to the one in Chicago, which didn't make an awful lot of sense. [Chuckle] They were somewhat comparable.

Int: [Laughter] Maybe they thought you'd concentrate better there.

MF: You know, that was never done on that basis. There were slots and there were people, and the location of where those people and the slots were didn't make any difference. People would be ordered from London to Sidney as if it was across the street, or vice versa. It wasn't done by computers. I guess they didn't have them. But in the assignment of personnel, distance didn't seem to have anything to do with it, although occasionally --

MF: Well, you would hear all these stories. I remember one story that some fellow had joined the Navy. He was an expert on sailing on the Pacific Coast, so he was sent to Italy. And somebody else who had lived in Italy was sent to Florida, or something of that kind. There were things like that. But in general we seemed to stumble through.

Int: To tie this back into your account, when you returned to San Francisco your father was not well, so you also then were able to be here to help with his affairs.

MF: Yes. I was here. I was pretty full time at the Federal Building on Fulton Street, but I did have weekends and times off. While I was still in the Navy -- this was '44, '45 -- I got somewhat involved with my father's business affairs and started picking up some of these things, as I mentioned earlier.

I would say the Navy was very interesting because it's getting away from your ordinary life, whatever it may be, where you're put in an entirely different setting with an entirely different set of values, dealing with people from a variety of backgrounds. I found it very interesting and I think it was a very good thing for me. I felt I gained a lot of information or intelligence about people and how they function under stress and what makes a good officer and what makes a good executive and that kind of thing. I wasn't maybe too conscious of it at the time, but I certainly realize now that it was a very, very good thing as far as my ability to cope with problems and things of that kind, to be taken out of one milieu and put into an entirely foreign one and more or less find out whether you can sink or swim.

Int: Do you think it had a direct relationship with the fact that you've been so effective in public affairs?

MF: Well, I hate to pass judgment of my own, but I think to some degree I got a better feeling of people by being in that kind of a situation than I would have just going along in a normal business atmosphere where things are pretty well -- well, they're pretty well set up before. During a situation like this, like the Navy, there are stresses and strains and you have to be innovative and you have to respond to new situations and you are forced to do things, which, under a normal progression in life, you don't have those kinds of things happen to you.

Int: I suppose you have none of the cushions that you have in civilian life.

MF: No, you certainly don't, and everybody is very much on his own. I mean, I would be told by my superior officer, 'Here's something. Do it!' Under normal circumstances, I might have said, 'Well, I don't understand anything about it. I don't feel that I'm able.' Well, you don't say that. If you don't feel you're capable, then you go and find out how to do it, or you ask somebody, or you get some material and do it pretty quickly.

The Navy and, I guess, the Army and all the other armed services, you know, grew from just nothing to tremendous millions and millions of people, and some way or other it worked. It doesn't work that way in normal life, but at least in that war there was a certain amount of dedication. People were really in there! Most people felt they had to do whatever they had to do. There was a certain amount of self-preservation involved and under those circumstances you certainly get the best out of people. They stretch themselves a little bit. I found it interesting and rewarding.

FOUNDATIONS

Int: There is a subject here that is of interest to the Oral History Office because it is doing some interviews on foundations, including comparatively small family foundations. I think you discussed yours specifically* and explained how it operates, but do you have any general thoughts about how such foundations fit into the whole scheme of --

MF: Well, family foundations, the smaller ones, as contrasted with the Ford Foundation or Rockefeller or Carnegie and so forth?

Int: Yes.

MF: I don't think the answers are all in on that. I think it's sort of hard to say whether they're really worthwhile or not. The 1969 tax revision law put an awful lot of penalties. In a sense now it's very hard to operate. We started in on a very informal basis. We just took our income and gave it away. Now we have to file reports, and we have to be very careful that we don't give to any organization that doesn't have the proper tax exemption, and we

*Pp. 100-101

MF: can't give to another family foundation. There are a lot of inhibitions put around it, plus the fact that at best it's a fairly expensive thing. You have to pay a certain amount of your income by way of a tax. We have to spend considerably more money than we'd like to on accounting procedures, filling out all the various forms that we have to file every year. I think it's about three different forms, two in the state and one federal, which are quite elaborate. You have to keep track of your investments and your income on a monthly basis.

So I think that will be rather an inhibiting force, and most of the family foundations that I know of have gone out of business. They've merged. They've transferred their assets to the San Francisco Foundation here because this clerical record-keeping has become a little onerous.

Int: The overhead got too heavy?

MF: Yes. Small foundations can be effective, I think. The principal advantage of one would be it has flexibility. It can respond to something immediately if you have to. We have sort of quarterly meetings, but if anything comes up in the meanwhile we'll have a telephone meeting, and if somebody needs something like \$1,000 to keep them from going out of business tomorrow, we can respond to that. In the case of a larger foundation they say, "Well, get in a proposal and we'll bring it up at our next meeting, and we don't meet for six months." So, we can be flexible and we can respond to things.

I think they have a place, but there has been some proposed legislation to even restrict foundations further and make it more difficult because there is this feeling by, I guess, the public to some degree, but certainly part of the Congress, that a foundation is some kind of a tax loophole, that you get away from paying your taxes. I can't quite understand it.

I think this concept of a foundation being a way of individuals avoiding or evading taxes comes about from the family foundations where there really were abuses, and there were many where an individual transferred some of his personal assets into the foundation and then had the foundation pay for his household or traveling expenses and that kind of, I'd say, hocus pocus. And there were those things. There were quite a lot of the abuses, so that in some cases it probably was a tax evasion device, but certainly not in our case.

MF: If properly policed, the money all goes to hopefully some proper cause, which, if not supported, would be supported, I suppose, by taxes or not supported at all and go out of business. But there's a hostility. There's something about it that bothers people that a person with large means can die and some way or other the government doesn't get any money out of that event; it goes to a foundation. That's where the rub comes.

There have been cases, I suppose, where a man has died and left his entire estate to a foundation and, therefore, there have been no inheritance taxes collected. But if inheritance taxes had been collected and the estate had been pretty well liquidated by paying taxes, I have a feeling that money would have been much more wasted than if it had been preserved in an entity that could carry on for an indefinite length of time in supporting charity and doing some philanthropy and certainly helping the arts.

Being on the other side, being involved in some of these things, I really don't know how we'd have carried out things like the San Francisco Symphony and other organizations unless we'd been able to look to private foundations for some degree of support.

To answer your question that I think you did ask me -- I don't think that it's likely that there'll be many family foundations formed because the laws have really made it very difficult. If people want to leave their money so that it is not dissipated, they'd be more likely to leave it to the San Francisco Foundation or some community trust, which also is a very good idea. But it gets a little more institutionalized that way. I mean, if the sources of funding are very few and they have rules and regulations that they don't do this and they don't do that, then the charitable organizations that are trying to get started, that have something innovative to offer, are less likely to get that help. I believe as a foundation gets larger it gets much more institutionalized, more professional, and more removed from the smaller needs. There are foundations, I suppose, the very large ones, that don't even consider small grants. If you ask for \$1,000 it gets lost. It's not considered. That's not true of the San Francisco Foundation. That's still got a degree of flexibility.

Int: That's been a very good one, hasn't it?

MF: I think one of the best, and I've always been very supportive of it. I've urged people to leave their money to it. I've given money myself from time to time. It think it's excellent. Considering the size and the wealth of the community, I think it rates very high

MF: nationally. New York, of course, has a similar kind of a thing, much bigger, and I'm not sure about other cities. But I think San Francisco has been very far-sighted in forming this, and I think they're giving something like \$4,000,000 a year in the last year.

I have been closely connected with it in watching their activities. Mr. [John R.] May, who is just actually retiring, who was their first and only director up to the present time, and I have been closely associated in many activities together, and I have followed their activities with a great deal of interest. I think it's been a great thing for the community. Of course, it's the San Francisco Foundation, but they don't restrict their gifts to San Francisco. They can take the Bay Area into consideration -- San Mateo County, Marin County, Alameda County.

CONTROVERSIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Int: I think I didn't follow up another thought, and that was: Are there other things not in the interview that should be?

MF: Well, you know, I made that statement a while ago that there were many, many other things, but they're of minor nature. As you read that thing and we're talking about a fifty-year period almost, there were a lot of little things. I served on a lot of ad hoc committees, study committees. I was recently -- I don't think I mentioned in there -- on a committee that the mayor appointed to study the problems of the waterfront. It was called the Mayor's Waterfront Committee. We did that for a year or so and filed a report which has to do with the survival of the port.

Over the years I have been on a lot of things that have come and gone. As a matter of fact, I like that kind of activity -- to get into something, do it, and then get out of it. There is very often a tendency to form an organization and then it's sort of self-perpetuating and they really don't have very much to do, but once having been formed they keep on going and try and find new things to do, which is rather expensive. I think it's much better to take these problems as they come, have a study if that's what has to be, and then get the conclusions, and then go out of business.

Int: Did the Waterfront Committee succeed in moving anything?

MF: I think they moved a few inches. Since then there's been another committee, another group. One of the problems of this kind of an approach is that when you start in you have a problem, obviously, or you wouldn't need a committee. You have a problem on which there are several different points of view. So the traditional method is that you form a committee that is representative to the extent possible and reasonable of the various points of view. Then they come in with a report. Sometimes those diverse opinions can't be resolved and you may have a minority report. But even if you have a unanimous report and they all join in it, then there seems to be another group who says, "Well, we weren't consulted and so we don't think it was a representative citizens' report." Maybe that group wasn't around when you started, but a year later they got formed because they had another point of view. There really isn't any way of always getting all points of view, particularly in the present climate of the cry for citizen involvement, whatever that means. In some cases it means every citizen has to be involved, which sort of works against the process of democratic solutions. The only way you really solve these problems where there are all these views is to do it by the method of voting and the majority wins, but then that doesn't make the minority happy.

But the study process, or the ad hoc committee study process, almost always comes up with a report that, even though it's a majority or even if it's unanimous, doesn't satisfy some segment who says, "Well, these things were forgotten. You didn't consider this or if you did you didn't give it weight -- so we ought to do it again." I think we have a lot of that going on.

We do have the Coastal Commission. I read that they just, I think, came in with a ruling that Standard Oil could not drill additional wells in the Santa Barbara channel. The area commission, whatever it is called, on a six-to-four vote decided that they could. But they have to have, I think, a two-thirds -- I don't know whether my arithmetic is right -- majority. The majority made the decision, but that doesn't mean that they're going to have the final say. Now the total commission can reconsider, and then when they get through, I suppose, whatever their findings are, somebody will bring a lawsuit. If they say they can, there'll be a group that will sue and say they can't, and if they can't then the proponents will sue. Many of these things just don't get resolved under any process.

Int: Does this mean that the whole democratic process has got so complicated that it doesn't work?

MF: Well, in a way, there's a little evidence of that. I don't think there's anything wrong with the democratic process, but I think it's

MF: gotten a little perverted. As I understand the democratic process, action is taken by an elected legislative body after a majority of that legislative body has made a decision. I don't think there's anything wrong with that concept, but that doesn't seem to work because when the majority decides the minority is not happy with it. And then if the legislature does not pass a bill we have an initiative, or if they do pass a bill, then we have a referendum. Those things are put in there for safeguards so that majorities can't run away and minorities have no interest, but it does have the effect of prolonging the agony. It takes just that much longer to get anything done. Maybe it gets done in the final analysis.

I think a good example is the highly controversial question of whether or not the Alaska pipeline should or should not be built. It was decided that it should and it will be built, but it was delayed three or four years because of all these other processes that get involved in litigation and rehearing of the subject and another group study made after the first one has made a decision.

Int: I suppose the Port of San Francisco is a good example of that over many years, isn't it, because in the first place it was given to the state because of a local political situation.

MF: Yes, that's right. You know the history of it well and that is why, because it was really considered a sort of a state resource and they just didn't want a lot of local politicians fooling around. Then it went from the state back to the city, and then you had the formation of the BCDC, which was to preserve the Bay, and the Port has -- well, they've gotten along, but they've stagnated, and a lot of things have to be done when they have to be done, and they don't get done because of this process.

Well, I think that's an interesting philosophical discussion. All I would say is that I could see a good deal of change in the way things do or do not get done as they did in earlier days. I wouldn't pass judgment that it was all bad. I think some of it is probably good that you don't rush into things, but I think at the moment we're on the other side of the pendulum, that things don't get done quickly enough because there are all these safeguards and second guessing and review procedures and citizen participation. But I think that there is a tendency to pass a lot of laws which are supposed to protect the minority view, and I guess you can use that minority thing in a very broad sense.

But fundamentally the democratic system, as I understand it, is that the majority is the one that makes the decisions.

INTERVIEW WITH JANET CHOYNSKI FLEISHHACKER

(Interview #1 - May 16, 1974)

THE CHOYNSKI FAMILY

Interviewer: Your grandfather, Isador Nathan Choynski, where was he born?

J.C. Fleishhacker: Well, I'm not absolutely certain where he was born, but from the material that I have I gather he was born in Graudenz or somewhere in that neighborhood in Polish Germany or German Poland; I do have letters which I cannot read because they're in, I suppose, Hebrew and Yiddish. I'm not certain, except that they're in a language I don't understand. But they are from his parents to him.

My understanding of the letters is that he wasn't too devoted a son. He didn't communicate with his family, once he'd come to this country, as often as they would have liked, and they're rather pleading with him to get a little bit more information from him and to perhaps be more supportive of them in that faraway land.

At any rate, I had always been told by my father's family that he came over as a very, very young man, landed in New York, and within weeks was teaching English in the public schools of New York.

Interviewer: Would he then have learned English in his native --

J.C. Fleishhacker: Well, I presume so. Of course, it's all presumption on my part. I was also told that it was a highly educated family and that the name Choynski came from the fact that (of course, as you know, all Jewish names were adopted names; the Jewish people were not allowed to have their names in the old days) there were antecedents who owned a great deal

JCF: of property and had deeded some of the property and established a university at the time of Napoleon in Poland. In recognition of that they had been allowed to take this name, which means "son of the woods" in Polish, I am told. It is a rather distinguished name in Poland, but it's also a Catholic name as well as a Jewish name.

Int: Then he came first to New York?

JCF: Yes. And I really do not know how he reached San Francisco or why. I don't know.

Int: I think I read that he had first opened a billiard parlor in San Francisco.*

JCF: I had never heard that either until I learned it from Dr. Rudolph Glanz.**

Int: Does it sound like him?

JCF: Well, you know, in those days I think people did almost anything to survive, so it's quite possible that he did. But it was never anything that was actually mentioned in the family, and so I know nothing of it either from hearsay or from personal knowledge.

Int: What sort of a man was he from a family point of view?

JCF: From a family view, he was a brilliant man but a very stubborn man. I think, as so many of the older generation were in those days, they were very strict with their children and very demanding of them. He had a mind of his own and apparently he was what we would call today "feisty." He had a reputation of being rather critical. I know he worked for some newspapers in San Francisco and was rather inclined to be very critical of the activities of the politicians and the people with whom he did not agree. He didn't hesitate to say what he felt.

He was a friend, I was told, of Mike de Young's and Charlie de Young's, and my aunt used to tell me quite frequently -- she was the one, really, who gave me most of the history that I have of the

*In the sketch of Choynski in Robert Ernest Cowan's Booksellers of Early San Francisco, Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1953. RT

**The New York Jewish historian.

JCF: family. She was my father's sister. My father was the eldest of the family.

Int: And what was her name?

JCF: Her name was Miriam Coe, Miriam Choynski. Most of the members of the family changed their name to "Coe" long years later. My father refused to change his name. This is jumping about a bit, but my father refused to change his name because he was an attorney, and his cousin, who was also an attorney, Mr. Milton Choynski, did not change his name. Both of them felt that their practices had been established in the name of Choynski and it would be too confusing to change them. But following my father's death my mother did change her name to Coe along with the rest of the family, and then Mr. Milton Choynski passed away.

Int: I interrupted you by asking about your aunt.

JCF: Yes. But my aunt is the person who gave me most of this information. She wove the tales, and how true they were, of course, I'm not in a position to know. But she always said that her father was very insistent that the family do exactly as he thought they should do. Not to digress, but to go back a little bit to the de Youngs, she used to tell me stories about remembering the de Youngs as a child, and that neither of the two Mr. de Youngs were very literate people and they were not able to write as well as my grandfather did. So they frequently, when they had an editorial or something of particular interest that they wished to write, would come in the horse and buggy and talk to my grandfather and ask him to come and write it for them.

Int: [Laughter] He edited his own newspapers too, didn't he?

JCF: He edited his own newspapers too and he was, as you know, the western correspondent for The Israelite, and I think I have one copy of The Israelite here. I knew nothing about that really until I read about it in the Isaac Mayer Wise book* -- that he was quite well known for that. But I was always told that he wrote quite heated editorials and things of a very critical nature, and he was not very popular as a result. But he did establish this small bookshop called The Antiquarian Book Store and it was one of the earliest, I believe, in San Francisco. I asked where it was located and I believe it was located on Geary Street between Grant Avenue and

*The Western Journals of Isaac Mayer Wise, edited by William M. Krammer. Berkeley, California: Western Jewish History Center, 1974.

JCF: Kearny, "Carny" as they pronounced it then. It was about where H. Liebes was, or there's a women's dress shop, I think, just about in that area. Apparently they lived there for many, many years, in that general area. I suppose they lived close to his place of business.* I don't know. I'm not too sure of that.

But I know that I was told that my father was born at the corner of O'Farrell and Stockton Streets where the City of Paris was and the new Liberty House building is going up. Of course the children were born at home in those days, and he was born right in a house at that corner.

My aunt also used to tell me stories of going to school from obviously that particular area, because she used to recount that when she was going to school she had to pass Maiden Lane and she was told never to go through Maiden Lane. She didn't know why, but she was told never, never to go through Maiden Lane. One day she sneaked through Maiden Lane and when she got to the middle of it she didn't quite understand what she was looking at, but she realized it was not something that was for the eyes of a very young girl and she scooted out the other end of the street. [Laughter] That was an experience she never forgot. So it must have been in that general area, because Maiden Lane is just around the corner from there.

Int: It wasn't even called that then, was it?

JCF: No. It was called something else,** but she always referred to it as Maiden Lane. She went to Madame Ziska's Academy for Young Ladies. [Chuckle] Did you ever hear of that?

Int: I've heard of it.

JCF: It was apparently one of the fine schools for young ladies in those days.

Int: She was the only girl in that family?

JCF: She was the only girl in the family. My father was born nine months

*The San Francisco city directories give various locations of both the book store and the residence from year to year. The Geary Street location of the store was the best known.

**Morton Street

JCF: and a few hours, almost, after my grandparents were married.* He was their first child, and then she was born some, I suppose, eighteen months later.

Int: Your father was Herbert?

JCF: Herbert, yes.

Int: Now, who were the other children in that family?

JCF: Well, there were Morrie, Joe, and Eddie.** Eddie was the baby of the family. I don't know if there were any infants that did not survive between Eddie and Joe or not. Joe was famous in his own right. Joe was a champion boxer. You're familiar with that apparently.

Int: Yes. He fought the famous fight on the barge --

JCF: Yes, the fight on the barge with Gentleman Jim Corbett. The family was always somewhat ashamed of his being a boxer. It was a disgrace in those days, of course. Well, it's still looked down upon, I suppose, but at this certain period of time it was just a shocking thing for them to have a son who was interested in this.

I remember Uncle Joe. He was one of the gentlest human beings I have ever met.

Int: What did he do after he --

JCF: He was never financially very successful. He left boxing and went East to live. He married Louise Miller, a Protestant, and lived in Chicago. He became an athletic director of a men's club, and then he took up chiropracting and he was a chiropractor until he died. But he was never terribly successful and I saw him very few times in my childhood. Of course, during a good deal of my youth

*Isador N. Choynski and Harriet Ashim were married on March 20, 1862, according to the marriage contract in the possession of Janet C. Fleishhacker.

"Since my father's birthday was January 8, this is obviously not entirely correct, but he certainly was conceived immediately after their marriage. JCF"

**Morris, Joseph B. and Edwin W. Choynski

JCF: I was not living in the United States. I'm not certain when he died, but I think it was either while I was away or shortly after I returned from Europe.*

Int: Morrie was --

JCF: Morrie owned small theatres in Chicago. He married an easterner** and lived in Chicago, and I saw him very rarely.

It was a strange family. There was not a close family tie in the Choynski family. In my mother's family the ties were very, very close, but in my father's family for some reason or other, perhaps due to the fact that my grandfather was rather domineering, he did not keep the family close. Except for my aunt, who kept in touch with all of them, they did not seem to have this family feeling that is so typical of the average Jewish family, I think.

Int: What about Eddie?

JCF: Eddie is the one member of that particular family that changed his name to Coe and he married -- strangely enough, my father was the only one of the family who married in the Jewish faith; the others all married Christian girls. Eddie married a Miss Dibert from San Francisco, Florence Dibert, who was brought up in the Mission, and they had three children, Florence, Edwin, Jr. and Harriet. Eddie died several years ago, but I still see his older daughter, Florence. The children are all married except for Florence, who has never married. She's a trained nurse. She graduated from Mt. Zion Hospital as a nurse and she is now retired also. But the brother and sister of that family are still living and have children and grandchildren. And Eddie's widow still survives.

Int: And your aunt, Miriam, did not marry?

JCF: Well, as I mentioned, I think, before the tape started, there was a sad element to this whole story of my aunt's great beauty and her relationship with her father. She was the apple of his eye, apparently. He just worshipped this beautiful daughter and nothing was too good for her. Quite contrary to my husband's family who did not believe in ostentation of any kind. He adorned her with diamond earrings and all the rest, spoiled the life out of her.

*He died January 25, 1943. See "San Francisco's Fighting Jew" by William M. Kramer and Norton B. Stern in the California Historical Society Quarterly, Winter 1974.

**Sarah, maiden name unknown, a Catholic. JCF

JCF: But no young man who came to court her was good enough for her. It's an old, old story. And she made the terrible mistake of eloping with someone who had been brought to the house by a mutual friend. He was an older man, he was a seagoing man, and he was a Christian besides. Apparently it was a disastrous marriage. She stayed with him some six months and at the time, of course, was told: "Never cross my portals. My daughter is lost to me." But she did come home, and her mother welcomed her, and they were divorced. It was the most dreadful disgrace in the world and, of course, I was a very grown woman before I knew that Aunt Miriam had ever been divorced. But in the light of looking at things today, we don't think those things are so serious.

Int: You said that the mother of this family that you're speaking of came from England?

JCF: My grandmother Harriet, my grandmother Choynski, was born in London. She was half Jewish. Her mother was born a Gentile and was converted to Judaism in order to marry her father. Her mother's name was Bartlett, and in order to marry Mr. Morris Ashim she converted to Judaism.

As I have been told by the family and by my grandmother, they came to the United States when she was eight or nine years old. She was a cripple. She was lame because at that age she fell and broke her hip on the marble steps of some public building. Of course, medicine was such in those days that they couldn't cure those injuries as easily as they do now and she remained lame. She limped all of her life, but she bore five very healthy children.

They went, I believe, to Louisville, Kentucky, as so many of the Jewish families did, and then came across the Isthmus of Panama to the coast. I remember being told also by my grandmother that when she was just nine years old, just a little girl, she became separated from her family on the west coast of the Isthmus. When they were to board the boat she was lost and they had great difficulty finding her, but they did find her and they boarded the clipper ship and came up the Pacific coast to San Francisco, arriving here about 1850.

Then she had the rest of her education in San Francisco and, as I mentioned to you before, attended the first class of Girls' High School and graduated in that class. During the course of her going to school, she met my grandfather in a rather romantic way. At least the story that I've been told is a very romantic one. She was a very serious student, much more interested in books than in

JCF: anything else, and she was at her home studying, lying on the floor studying, and the rabbi came in to call. He said to her, "Harriet, what are you doing there?" She said, "I am writing a report for school on President Polk." She was already a young lady, I suppose, in her late teens. He said, "Harriet, I will introduce you to a young man who can tell you more about President Polk than you can find in all those books you're reading," and he brought to her the man who became my grandfather. [Laughter]

Int: [Laughter] Oh, that's delightful.

JCF: Isn't that charming? Her interest in literature was such that there is another family story which I've told my grandchildren very often, nowadays when cooking is such a popular pastime and activity. My grandmother never cooked in her life. She could hardly boil water. The story was that shortly after she was married and they were living, as I told you, on Stockton and O'Farrell, her parents, who had household help of some sort, used to send the meals over every day. Her husband said to her, "Harriet, I did not marry to have my mother-in-law provide the meals in my home. I expect my wife to do it." So she said, "Very well," being the typical obedient wife of the period, and she lit a fire in the wood and coal stove and she put a pot roast on the top of the stove. Dickens' Bleak House had just been published and she had a copy of it, and she sat down to read it and she became so engrossed in Bleak House that the fire went out and the pot roast never cooked and he came home and found an uncooked dinner and she was still engrossed in the book. She never cooked another meal as long as she lived. [Laughter] But I suppose, being a literary man himself, that's what he liked in her.

Int: I suppose! Do you know anything about his publication of a newspaper called the Alaska Herald?

JCF: No, I've never heard of that.

Int: Public Opinion, I guess, was his own paper.

JCF: Public Opinion was his own paper and then he wrote in the Wasp, didn't he? I believe he wrote some rather -- "Waspish" articles.

Int: He sounds as if he would have.

JCF: Yes, I think he did write occasionally for the Wasp.

I know that there was always a story that he was called "I.N.," always referred to as "I.N.," not "Isador" but "I.N. Choynski" --

JCF: never as "Isador" on anything. They used to say my father was equally feisty and difficult, but a marvelous man, a man whom I worshipped. As a very young man when he was still going to school he used to work occasionally in the bookstore. People would come in and say, "Is I.N. in?" He would say, "Yes," and they would say, "Where is he?" He would say, "Who?" And they would say, "Choynski," and he'd say, "Oh, he's gone out." "But," they'd say, "You said he was in." He'd say, "I did not." They'd say, "You said I.N. was in," and he'd say, "Well, it is in." [Laughter]

He had a brother here, incidentally. Did you know that? I.N. had a brother who had two sons, Milton Choynski, the lawyer, a graduate of UC Berkeley and its law school, and Harry, who became vice-president of the Anglo-London Bank. I.N.'s brother's name was Isaiah, I believe.

Int: There was an Isaiah who wrote for the San Francisco Chronicle. Would that be the one?

JCF: That was he, yes.

Int: That was a literary family.

JCF: Yes, it was. And I say this must have stemmed from this background of the university in Poland and all the rest of it.

Int: The family must have been relatively affluent then.

JCF: Well, I've never gotten that impression. I've never really felt that they were either affluent or in want. I think they were always perfectly comfortable, but it was never -- this was an era when men were making money in the mines and in the railroads and in all of these big enterprises, and I gather that neither of these men was that type of person. They were more interested in things of the mind and the investments that they made were never too successful, but they were never in want.

Int: I'm looking down the list of Choynskis in the 1891 San Francisco directory [reading] Miss Miriam; Morris A.; Sol, a clerk in a hardward company.

JCF: I don't know who that is. Was that a Choynski also?

Int: Yes. It might have been another family.

JCF: I don't know any other Choynskis in San Francisco.

Int: Then in the 1900 directory [reading] Edwin W.

JCF: Yes, that's Edwin Walker Choynski. That is Uncle Eddie.

Int: [Continuing reading] Harriet; and Harry, of the Anglo-California Bank.

JCF: I have a book here, if I can lay my hands on it. [Tape off while looking for book.]

Int: The 1889 San Francisco Blue Book.

JCF: [Reading from Blue Book] Herbert Choynski, 1209 Golden Gate Avenue. That's my father.

Int: Golden Gate Avenue --

JCF: They did live on Golden Gate Avenue. I think they lived on Golden Gate Avenue at the time of the fire because I seem to recall my aunt telling me that she walked out of her house on Golden Gate Avenue the morning of the earthquake and saw all the fronts of the houses down.

Int: In 1891, Joseph B., who was then listed as a candy maker, was living at that address.*

JCF: Oh, was he? It could very well have been.

Int: And so was Miss Miriam and so was Morris A. They were all living at 1209 Golden Gate Avenue in 1891.

JCF: Yes. Well, then, my father was living at home at that time.

I also often heard my aunt tell stories of the Washauer House, a very high type boardinghouse-hotel where the entire family lived for years. Isaiah married Fannie Washauer, a daughter of the family that owned the hotel. It was at Fifth and Market. That was before Eddie was born.

*In the 1892 directory he was listed as "pugilist," at the same address. He had worked as a candy maker throughout his early career as a boxer.

THE BERGER FAMILY

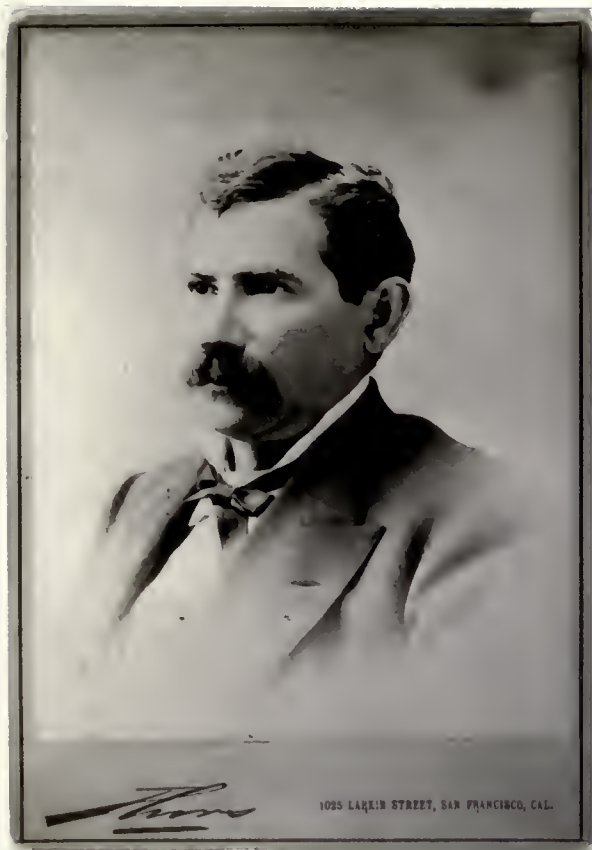
Int: Your father married Miss --

JCF: Her name was Ethel Berger. She had been born in Chicago. Her father was born in Poland, and his name was Sperling. He never used the name. His father died when he was quite small and his mother remarried a Mr. Reuben Berger and he was raised as a Berger. He came to the United States, to Pennsylvania, when he was quite a young man and his mother remained behind with her children by her second marriage. Then when the husband of that marriage died he brought his mother and several of the children out to America. I don't know how he met my maternal grandmother at all. She had been born, I believe, in Russia and I don't know what her maiden name was. I don't think my uncle, Mike, Maurice Berger, who is still alive, even knows what his mother's maiden name was.

But she was a very lovely looking woman, as you can see in this picture. [Shows picture.] Her name was Jeannette and I was called after her, Janet. Mother said she had reddish hair.

Apparently they were delightful people, but he was a very improvident kind of a man. He was in the produce business and he was very restless from what Mother told me. He would make and lose fortunes in rapid succession. He'd be very affluent and do very well, and then suddenly everything would go to pieces and then he'd have to start in all over again.

As I say, Mother and her older brother and I suppose her next younger brother were born in Chicago and then they moved to Toronto, Canada. Mother was born 1879. She spent most of her youth in Canada. Her mother apparently gave birth to ten children, but there were only four who survived. Mike, who was like a brother to me rather than an uncle, was the baby of the family. There must have been a long hiatus between surviving children before he arrived. He was born in Toronto, and then because of this restlessness of the father they moved out to western Canada, to Vancouver, and he was in the produce business there. My mother told me that as a very young girl in her early teens, I suppose, her older brother, Uncle Nat, and her father came down by ship, which was necessary to do in those days, to California to purchase produce for sale in Canada. They went back on the ship with a shipload of produce, and my grandfather caught typhoid fever and he was desperately ill when they reached Vancouver and was unable to do anything. This young



I.N. Choynski
Janet Fleishhacker's grandfather



Herbert Choynski
Janet Fleishhacker's father

JCF: boy, about sixteen or seventeen years of age, was called upon to assume the responsibility, and the produce rotted and they lost everything at that time. Nat then became a photographer in Victoria.

So Mother saw many hard days as a young girl, and I don't know how old the children were when they moved to San Francisco. But I do know that all of the youngsters had to go to work. Now, my mother and all of that family were tremendously intellectual in their interests but had very little opportunity to develop their intellectual interests except privately. Mother said she used to have to sneak to read books because it was required of her to work, and to work in the household. It was considered necessary, I suppose, to maintain the family. But they had tremendous dignity apparently. If my mother was any indication of it, the dignity and the pride in the family was enormous.

They lived on Harriet Street when they first arrived in San Francisco. My grandfather went into the business of manufacturing cigars in Chinatown, and Mike tells me he spoke some Chinese. Nat went to work for Roos Brothers.

Mother went to work at a very early age, when young girls did not work, as a stenographer for Pacific Hardware Company. She was about seventeen or eighteen years old when she went to work.

Then she has often told me the story of my grandfather being taken ill. He had cancer and he was taken to the hospital. My grandmother worked very hard at home and was getting thinner and thinner and looking worse and worse. My mother used to come home from work and try to help with the household and all. She always did her share. My grandmother was terribly ill and they called the doctor and he operated on her on the kitchen table and she died. My grandfather was in the hospital at the time, and about three months later he died. This was in 1904. Both grandparents were fifty-one years old when they died.

So this relatively young family was left. I guess the older brother was in his late twenties, and then my mother, who was about twenty-five, and the next brother, who may have been sixteen or seventeen, and this nine-year-old youngest brother. So their family feeling was very strong. Their ties were very strong, and they really upheld one another and they raised this little boy.

JCF: It was about one year later, I suppose, when my mother and father met.* My father fell madly in love with my mother. He was a confirmed bachelor in his forties, but he fell madly in love with my mother at first sight. Apparently she was very, very beautiful and she was very creative, a very talented person. The first time he met her was in her brother Sam's office. They had offices in the same building, in the old Chronicle building on Market Street, and he came into my Uncle Sam's office to speak to him, and his sister was standing there and he was introduced. He looked at her and he said, "Would you like to see a lawyer's office?" And she said, "Thank you very much. I would be interested." He took her upstairs and showed her around his law office with all of his law books. He was a very handsome man. He escorted her back to her brother and went back and said to his law partner, "I've met the girl I'm going to marry," which he did.

They were to have been married in 1906, in May, but of course the fire and earthquake took place in April and both my father and mother lost everything they had in the fire and earthquake, so their marriage had to be postponed until August of that year. They were married at Tait's on Van Ness Avenue.

Int: My word! That's quite a story.

JCF: It's quite a romantic story.

PARENTS; CHILDHOOD

Int: Your father had studied law. Had he gone to a law college or had he studied in a lawyer's office?

JCF: He studied law at a law college and I've forgotten the name of it. It was somewhere just on the outskirts of San Francisco. Perhaps you would know. Which one would it be? Was there something that had the name San Francisco or Golden Gate attached to it? Of course, there are two such places now, but I don't think they have any connection.

Int: I don't know.

*Mike says they met in 1905. JCF

JCF: I don't really know what it was.

Int: He was born --

JCF: He was born January 8 and I suppose it was 1863. As a matter of fact, I can check very readily because I have a letter written to my grandmother just before he was born and just after he was born, and the dates are on those letters. So I can check that.*

Int: And then I suppose his father thought it was well for him to be educated?

JCF: Well, so far as I know I think it was very necessary for him to be educated. Oh, yes indeed. I really don't know what schools they attended, but I know that they were all educated. Definitely, yes. Well, you see, the daughter graduated from Girls' High School, so that's an indication of that. Although I don't believe my father went to the University, he did study law, and not in a lawyer's office.

But he had a tremendous desire to be appointed to West Point, to the military at West Point, and it was almost unheard of for a Jew to ever receive such an appointment, and it was a bitter disappointment to him that he was not appointed. He volunteered for the Army and went into the Spanish American War. I don't think he was ever in Cuba, but he did serve away from California during the Spanish American War and loved the military to such an extent that he remained in the reserve and National Guard all of his life really.

I remember as a child -- we lived just in back of where my husband lived, and we grew up back-to-back.

Int: Oh, did you?

JCF: He didn't tell you that part of our story?

Int: No.

JCF: [Laughter] It's kind of interesting that we grew up, as I said, back-to-back.

Int: You were on -- what? -- Broadway?

*1863 is correct. JCF

JCF: Broadway between Fillmore and Steiner.* He was on Pacific between Fillmore and Steiner.

We had a large room in the attic which was called the Cedar Room. You know, so many of the houses had those cedar closets. I can remember as vividly as though it were yesterday my father's uniforms hanging in that closet, and his guns. It now horrifies me to think that his guns were always available, and his swords, which I still have. And if I fell down and skinned my knee, he would say, "A soldier's daughter never cries."

I was brought up with this feeling that the military was so terribly important, and patriotism and bravery and courage -- those were the most lovely virtues that one could have, and it was terribly, terribly important to him. When he died he left in his will that he wanted to be buried -- the only real desire he had was to be buried at the Presidio with the other soldiers without any special marker on his grave so that (and he put this in his will) when people walked over it they'd say, "So that's where that son of a bitch lies." He was an extraordinary man. He really was. [Laughter]

Int: And you were the only child?

JCF: I was an only child, so you can imagine how spoiled I was. During my childhood -- you said you are interested in my childhood -- I can never remember a day of my childhood that my father did not bring me a gift of some kind, sometimes a very small gift, a box of chewing gum or some chocolates. I don't think you're old enough to remember kewpie dolls, but my room was lined with kewpie dolls because he brought so many. And he used to play with me as a child would play. He had a whole closet full of silly hats and costumes that he'd put on, and he'd play house with me and he'd play the butcher and the baker and the candlestickmaker. I had a playhouse in the attic. He'd ring the doorbell and come to the door and pretend that he was selling his goods to me, and then could be my visitor and sit down and have tea with me. He would take me to the park and take me to the beach -- it wasn't a zoo in those days. We went out to Playland; it wasn't called Playland, but out at the beach they had all of the amusement park there. And to the Panama Pacific International Exposition, which was during my childhood. He'd skip on the street with me and I'd say, "Oh, Daddy, don't be so silly!" [Laughter] He'd play with me by the hour.

*2371 Broadway

Int: And he was not young when you were born.

JCF: No, not at all. He could have been my grandfather. I mentioned this young brother of my mother's, Mike, Maurice Berger. He raised my uncle, you see. My uncle lived in the house with us and he was about fourteen when I was born, thirteen and a half when I was born. So he was just like my older brother. My father paid for his tuition. He went to Hitchcock Military Academy -- obviously a military academy [laughter] -- and I can remember, as he was growing up, my mother watching over him to make sure that he didn't go out with the girls too often and that he had his share of the household chores and all the rest of it. She raised him just as she did me. She was very strict with him. But she was a very remarkable woman. She was a very beautiful woman and a very creative woman and there wasn't anything that she couldn't do, absolutely nothing.

Uncle Sam, Sam Berger, was a very fine athlete and a very handsome young man. I remember him quite well. He died at a very early age. He died of cancer at the age of forty-two, which was a great tragedy, but he was a very fine athlete and he was an amateur boxer. He was a member of the Olympic Club at the age of sixteen, an athletic member of the Olympic Club, because the members of the Olympic Club recognized his great athletic talent. He won the first gold medal in boxing, for the United States at the Olympic Games in St. Louis in 1904. It's a beautiful real gold medal which I showed to Mr. [Avery] Brundage a year or so ago and which thrilled him because he'd never happened to have seen a gold medal from those particular Olympic Games. The medals are not solid gold today.

Uncle Sam was a man who was tremendously interested in social reform and the underdog and prison reform. He was very concerned with all things of a sociological nature and he was a great friend of Arthur Brisbane, the famous columnist for the Hearst papers, and many of the writers of that era who were interested in social reform and prison reform and improvement of the position of the working class.

He was an avid reader and he had a very fine library. In those early days which to me is astounding, he had a copy of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto and all of the Marx books, and Debs, and many books on social problems. I inherited his library and I have kept those books which dealt with those matters because I felt it was interesting to have almost original editions. They're not fine editions. The bindings are not fine or anything of that

JCF: kind, but they were early editions of these famous writers who had such an influence on our society today. It's always interested me that he should have been interested in it in an era when very few people were, in his walk of life.

Int: Were your uncles in business?

JCF: Yes. They had a men's clothing store on Market Street.*

Int: All of them together?

JCF: The three of them together, yes.

Int: I'd like to ask you a little about your father's law practice if you knew anything about it. Did you?

JCF: I don't know too much about my father's law practice. He had different law partners at different times. His offices were at 110 Sutter, which was then the French Bank Building, near the Hallidie Building, on that block. I remember going to my father's law offices and I remember seeing tomes and tomes and tomes, rooms full of law books. He was a very independent man all of his life, and I know that he had no hesitancy about telling the judges what he thought of them [laughter], so I suppose that didn't make him too popular. He was a great espouser of causes, particularly the underprivileged. I know he had many black clients and he was always very concerned that the black people exploited their own very badly. This was always a matter of great concern to him.

My mother used to be very angry with him because she said he underestimated his own talents, that he made a very serious mistake in taking care of people and then not charging them adequate fees. But he would take his remuneration for his services in kind. He had, for instance, Jewish clients who were in the kosher meat business and he could have just as well asked them a very substantial fee for his services, but he was perfectly content to take meat from them instead. My mother said, "They will only value you as much as you value yourself and you are very foolish to do this." But Daddy was the kind of person who never would.

Int: You didn't observe kosher food customs?

JCF: Never, never. Mother used to buy kosher meat because it was good meat, but the last thing in the world she did was ever --

Int: Did you observe other Jewish customs in the family?

*Berger's Clothing and Haberdashery, 856-860 Market Street.

JCF: Never. As a matter of fact, my father considered himself an atheist, if there is such a thing, and my Aunt Mamie, as we all called her, Miriam, gave me a child's Bible when I was quite small and my father was furious. He took it away from me and he said he didn't want my mind put in prison; he wanted no part of it. Although my mother had been raised in a kosher household in Canada, they had long since forgotten that. Certain sort of sub-conscious prejudices remained with her. She denied that they had anything to do with her upbringing, but I was always convinced. For instance, she would never eat pork. She claimed she didn't like it, but I've always claimed it was a throwback to her training as a child, although she did eat ham and bacon.

Int: Was your grandfather's household --

JCF: My Grandfather Choynski? Not at all, not at all.

Int: Not very religious?

JCF: No, I don't think my parents -- I suppose that they were religious to the extent that they observed the holidays, as most Jewish families did in those days and, you see, my grandmother's father had been a member of the B'nai B'rith.* They had that kind of association, but never really observant from a religious point of view, and I was not raised in an observant household.

But Daddy, as far as his law practice was concerned -- mother used to really be very provoked, not that she was grasping from a monetary point of view, but she felt that Daddy would not give himself sufficient worth.

Int: I happen to be looking at a history of the Abe Ruef period and there was a mention of your father.**

JCF: That's correct. He exposed Ruef. He was one of the people who exposed the graft. He was a very, very strong activist against any kind of double dealing, very, very definitely so. He was a great admirer of Robert Ingersoll's.

*According to Kramer and Stern [op. cit.], I.N. Choynski was an officer of the B'nai B'rith. RT Correct. JCF

**Lately Thomas, in A Debonair Scoundrel (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), describes an incident involving "a pugnacious political lawyer named Herbert Choynski, who was at outs with Ruef."

JCF: I showed you a photograph of my father and Charlie Chaplin. My father was the lawyer for Bronco Billy Anderson. Does that name mean anything to you?

Int: Yes. In the history of motion pictures it certainly does.

JCF: Bronco Billy Anderson had Essenay Films at Niles Canyon. It was a name, S. & A. But they spelled it "Essenay," which was S. & A., the initials. The "A" was for Anderson and the "S," I'm sorry to say, I don't know who that was.

Charlie Chaplin was under contract to them. Charlie Chaplin was acting for them at Niles, and Billy Anderson, who I remember as a child very well, wanted to sign him up for I think it was a \$25,000 a year contract or something like that. My father refused to draw up the contract. He said it was too much money. [Laughter] But he was persuaded to do so since Mr. Anderson knew him very well and he was in his employ as, I guess, his lawyer, so he finally agreed to do it.

But I do remember as a child going to Niles Canyon and seeing Charlie Chaplin act and meeting him many times and sitting on his lap. Of course, I always sat on [laughter] -- you know, they used to take little girls on their laps in those days. Mother used to refer to it very often. It was so amazing the tremendous success that that man had, and Daddy had really written his first contract for films.

Int: He didn't look like a winner when you sat on his lap? [Laughter]

JCF: Well, I wasn't old enough to judge whether he was a winner or not. He was a funny little man with a funny -- you know, he was in costume, of course, with his funny little moustache. [Laughter]

Int: That's a delightful little snapshot you have.

JCF: Yes, it is.

YEARS IN EUROPE

JCF: When I was fourteen, Daddy was very involved in some business matters that kept him away from the city a great deal and Mother had always wanted to go to Europe. So she decided that since he was going to be away from home a lot that this was the ideal time to take me. This sister-in-law, who was considerably older than she, had never

JCF: been abroad. She was not affluent. She had worked also, and did not have the wherewithal to permit herself a trip to Europe. So my mother persuaded my father to pay for my aunt's trip as well, and my aunt and my mother and I left for Europe in 1923. I did not return to the United States until late in '27, and I had not set foot back in the United States in all that time.

Int: I know that you were educated a good deal in Europe. Did any of your contemporaries have such an experience?

JCF: No, no. Well, yes, actually my daughter-in-law's mother went abroad at just about the same time. Her parents were divorced and her mother had many French antecedents, and relatives in France. I knew Mary Gamburg, née Mary Meyer, my daughter-in-law's mother, as a young girl. Our mothers were friends. They weren't close friends, but we knew one another, and Mary and I had gone to the same school.* We met in Paris just by happenstance. We had both gone abroad at the same time, but I didn't see her during the course of the years that I lived there.

It was not frequent at all, but Mother just had this terrific desire for me to have exposure to foreign languages and foreign influence and so forth, and she wanted to have the experience herself. Since Daddy was not around very much, she thought this was the ideal time. And then, you see, she didn't leave Daddy alone, because her three brothers lived with him. I told you the devotion in that family was enormous, and my father was very devoted to his brothers-in-law. So the three brothers lived in the house until the one brother, Sam, married. Actually, he married just before we went abroad, so he was no longer living in the house, but Nat and Maurice continued to live there. So, Dad maintained the household. The servants remained and the household went on.

Daddy came over and visited us and Mother came home once during that period to visit her home. Actually, she came home when Uncle Sam died.** She was called home. But I remained over there and my aunt remained with me as sort of a chaperone, so I always had someone close by, and I had close to four marvelous years.

Int: Were you in Paris all of the time?

*See p. 390

**See p. 307

JCF: No. When we first went over we traveled. We went over in May, and we traveled quite extensively until the beginning of the school year in October and then I went into a school in Paris at Autevil, which had been recommended to us by some people Mother knew. Their daughter had been there twenty-five years previously and it was supposed to be a very fine school. When I got there it proved to be an absolute disaster. It was a miserable place and I was very unhappy, but again funds were not all that plentiful that Mother wanted to waste the money that she'd spent on the advance tuition, and so she asked me if I would put up with it until the end of the school term, which I said I would do. I stayed until Christmas and then at Christmas we went up to St. Moritz for our two weeks of wonderful Christmas vacation, and when I came back I went straight into the second school and I adored that.

Int: What school was this?

JCF: It was called La Roseraie. It was at Neuilly, and it was a school primarily for foreign girls. The first school was primarily for French girls and by the time I got there -- I don't like to sound class conscious, but they were rather second class girls. They weren't really the top grade of girls. They were very strict, and it was a very unpleasant place. But at the second school the headmistress was a very, very remarkable woman, and she had a tremendous influence on my life. We were only sixteen girls in the school and it was absolutely delightful. I stayed there for two years and, of course, we traveled every vacation. We traveled extensively during every vacation and at the end of the second year at La Roseraie, we went on down to Italy.

There Mother took an apartment in a hotel and found a young woman to be my companion who came to me every day and we studied Italian.

Int: In Rome?

JCF: In Rome, yes. Oh, I had a heavenly year in Rome, just marvelous!

I keep talking about Mother because I think she was quite amazing. She was very outgoing. She loved people. She made friends easily. She took this small apartment in a hotel in Rome and she found this young woman. The young woman had a brother who was just a bit older than I. Gianna Rossi was ten years older than I and Tullio was perhaps four years older than I.

Mother had open house every single day and all of the young people, friends of this girl and her brother, were welcome. She

JCF: served tea and they would come and bring their guitars and they'd sing and we'd have a gay time. We'd all go out to dinner and once in a while Mother would cook dinner. We didn't have a kitchen, but she was so friendly with the manager of the hotel that he allowed her to fix a sort of a pseudo-kitchen in the bathroom where she was able to prepare some of her favorite dishes, and they would beg for invitations to come for one of Mother's meals in the hotel rooms.

It was just the most marvelous existence because we would go off on excursions to, oh, Sicily and other parts of Italy. Mother would not only take Gianna, but she would also take Tullio along. So, whenever we got to a city they would phone their friends and say, "Here I am, but I've got an American girl with me," and immediately their friends would say, "Bring her over," and that way I got to know people all over Italy. It was an enchanting life.

Int: Wasn't that clever of your mother, really.

JCF: It showed something of her character that she was able to adapt to this kind of thing.

Int: What did she do while you were studying? Did she have pleasures of her own that she --

JCF: Oh, yes indeed! She was an avid sightseer and she and my aunt did a great deal of sightseeing and a great deal of reading. She made some friends of her own and, of course, in those days, you know, a girl didn't go anywhere without a chaperone, so Mother went along most of the places that I went.

Int: I suppose especially in Rome.

JCF: Yes. Well, in Paris I was chaperoned by the school, but in Paris Mother had friends. There were always Americans coming over on visits and there were other French friends that Mother had. She always managed to keep herself very, very busy. As I say, she loved traveling with a passion because she traveled extensively after I was married too.

Int: Well, that takes you almost to the time of your marriage, doesn't it?

JCF: Yes.

RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO

JCF: [Continuing a discussion of traveling with her husband.] But I do have a facility for languages and he doesn't, and we laugh a great deal over the fact that he says that I go on chattering away and he does what he can. [Laughter]

Int: Where did you meet? You'd known him always, of course.

JCF: Well, I had not known him always.

Int: You mean you had lived in the same block and had not --

JCF: Well, that's the extraordinary thing that he didn't touch on, you see. The story is that the house in which my husband was born on Pacific Avenue, as you know, was built by his mother, and the house next door belonged to his aunt.* The property which the two sisters owned ran through the block to Broadway, which was lower than they, and they had a beautiful view of the Bay, which those houses still have. Somewhere around 1914, when the area was becoming more thickly populated and houses were being built, the two sisters decided, and I suppose their husbands helped them decide, that it was foolish to hold onto the property, that it was too valuable property to hold onto and keep unoccupied, but by the same token it would be very foolish to sell it to someone who might build and obstruct their view. So they chose rather to build four houses, two belonging to each sister, on Broadway between Fillmore and Steiner, directly behind their own houses. My parents were the first tenants in one of the two houses belonging to Mrs. Levison, and we moved in in 1915, just as the Panama Pacific International Exposition was about to open, and I was a little girl of six at the time -- seven in September.

Int: That must have been an amazing area. There were some remarkable people.

JCF: [Laughter] It was a very fun neighborhood to live in.

As a little girl I played on what was known as "The Block," which is this flat block just below us here,** between Steiner and and Pierce. Of course, there were cobblestones on the Fillmore Street hill and the Broadway hill. There were cobblestones on this

*Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr. and Mrs. Jacob B. Levison

**The residence of Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr. on the corner of Pacific and Pierce.

JCF: Broadway hill because everything was delivered by horse and wagon and the horses had to be able to get a footing on the hill, so they had the cobblestones for them. There was no such thing as heavy traffic, so it was a very safe area for children to play and there were some forty children who played on this block. Interestingly enough, I see many of them to this day. It was a very interesting group of families that lived in this area.

Of course, these uncles lived with us too. My mother ran a very generous Bohemian type of household with people coming and going. My uncles had the privilege of inviting guests at any time of the day or night for as many meals as they wanted. She was always hospitable and ready to receive, and Daddy did the same thing.

I remember looking out of my bedroom window and seeing children playing above me in these two houses. I now know that it was my husband and his sister and his cousins who lived next-door, the Levison boys, but I had no idea who they were then. They were just neighborhood children who played there and they had their own group of friends. They did not form a part of this group on "The Block." So I went abroad. The name "Fleishhacker" meant nothing to me. When I went abroad I knew nothing about who they were or anything about them. I didn't even know one of the families owned the house in which I lived.

When I came back from Europe I had had my eighteenth birthday, and I had never been to an American high school. I decided that I had to have an American high school diploma and I insisted that I be allowed to go into high school. So I applied for entrance to Miss Hamlin's and because I was eighteen and didn't have a normal educational background, they gave me certain examinations and they gave me credit for my French and credit for Italian and credit for various things, and I entered Hamlin's as a junior.

I had met Paul Bissinger when I was abroad. He had been traveling abroad with other young people whom I did know from San Francisco. We met in Rome, I think it was, and we had quite a good time together. Then they came back and he had started this Temple Players group. He called me one day on the telephone and said, "We have this Temple Players group and we're having some tryouts for a play. Will you come and try out?" I said, "Well, perhaps. I'll see." So I told Mother what it was all about and she said, "Well, I think you should do that. You've been away from home for so long and you've lost track of so many of the young people. You're rather alone and it would be nice for you to make

JCF: some new friends. Why don't you go and try out? There's nothing to be lost."

I had been given a car for my eighteenth birthday, a Chrysler "75," so I drove myself out to Temple Emanu-El and tried out for this play, The Circle, by Somerset Maugham, and was given the ingenue lead. The person who played opposite me was my husband.

Int: He didn't say he played in that!

JCF: He didn't say a word; but he was the leading man in The Circle, you see. That's when we fell in love, during the course of the rehearsals for that play. I started driving myself to the rehearsals and after two or three rehearsals he asked me where I lived and I told him and he said, "Well, for heaven sakes, I live around the corner. Don't drive. I'll pick you up and take you," which he continued to do.

Then before the play was presented I had a date with another young man whom I knew who was very attentive and a very nice young man. I said, "I have a rehearsal," and he said, "I'll go to the rehearsal and then we'll go dancing at the St. Francis afterwards," which was the usual thing to do in those days. So he sat through the rehearsal, and during the entire rehearsal my husband kept mumbling under his breath, "Who's he? Who's he? What's he doing here?" [Laughter] And I said, "I have a date with him afterwards." He said, "Get rid of him! Get rid of him! I'll take you out." So I made some excuse of a headache or something and I sent this young man home and went out with my husband and that's the first time he told me he was in love with me. He pretends not to remember, but I've always remembered that. [Laughter] And, you see, from a man's point of view it doesn't seem nearly as romantic.

[Telephone rings. Tape off.]

COURTSHIP AND SOCIAL PRESSURES

JCF: Apparently, from what we've been told many times since, everyone in the place was aware of the fact that this romance was going on. Of course, he was still in college at that time and I did not know my parents-in-law. I had not met them. They knew nothing about me. There was very strong feeling at that time of the class distinctions among the Jewish people. You know, there were the German Jews and the Russian Jews and the Sephardic Jews. The fact, I suppose, that

JCF: my uncle had been a prize fighter was a terrible stain on the family escutcheon. For whatever reason, it was very obvious that my husband's parents wanted no part of me, and they heard these rumors about this young woman that their son was going with and they didn't like the idea at all.

I wasn't sophisticated really but I felt sophisticated and worldly for having lived abroad. I wore a boyish bob, I had grown up in Europe and I had certain continental ways about me. I wore long earrings. To this day, I've never owned any rouge, so I never made up, and I didn't drink at all because I was brought up in Europe where bootleg liquor was unheard of and hard liquor not drunk. I was shocked by it when I came home. But, to them, I was some terrible vixen that was out to get their boy, who came from a family not in their circle, you see.

I was completely unconscious of this, but I know now that this was what was going on in their minds and, of course, in all fairness, he was awfully young. I, at eighteen, was not nearly as young as he was at nineteen. So they objected very strenuously to me and I think they tried almost from the very beginning to discourage him from seeing me and going out with me.

In the meantime, during the whole period that this was going on, I remember I was in Hamlin School, and in those days the school was located on Pacific Avenue. They moved while I was at the school to where they currently are, but the school was on Pacific Avenue in two old Victorian houses. He and his father walked downtown to work every day after he'd graduated from school and he'd started working at the bank. They used to walk past the school and I used to get to school early and see him walking down. This was an arrangement between us. We'd see each other, but he never dared let his father know that I was standing there on the steps of the school because he knew that they would object so strenuously. Of course, he wouldn't go into that, but it is part of the family history nevertheless, and the children all know it.

Then he had his twentieth birthday, and they had been objecting and objecting and objecting. So it was because of that that they suggested he go to New York, and he said, "Yes, I will go to New York, but in the end of a year if I still feel the same way I'm going to do as I choose." Well, I think actually in retrospect that there was no harm in that because he was terribly young. My family's feelings were: "We like this young man. He has all the qualifications that we like, except that he is so young that we feel it's very foolish for you to marry anyone who could very easily change his mind. He's too young to really know his mind, besides which we don't

JCF: want our daughter marrying into a family where she's not welcome." You know, I was the apple of their eye. They adored me, and to think that I would go into a family where I was not fully welcomed was anathema to them.

So he went East. In the meantime, incidentally, we were still in this house, you see, on Broadway. But his cousin, Robert Levison, had been married and had twins and then she very soon afterwards expected a third child -- they were looking for a house, and our lease had expired on our house and my father had not renewed because our plans were uncertain. So they wanted the use of the house and they asked if we would relinquish the house, which my parents were very happy to do, and we moved down to Hillsborough temporarily, because my mother always had in the back of her mind that she wanted to return to Europe with me.

So while we were living in Hillsborough Morty was working in New York and, incidentally, he wrote me every single day that he was in New York, and he doesn't write letters. He hates to write letters. But he never missed a day for the whole time he was in New York of writing to me, and he phoned me every single weekend, which I think is very touching too.

I had a very heavy Italian beau that I had been very terribly in love with in Italy and thought I wanted to marry, and I was a little unhappy at having to come home and not marrying him. He had followed me out to San Francisco and he was in San Francisco at the time, but I realized when he was here that this was not for me and not what I wanted. So he stayed on in San Francisco for quite a while, but nothing ever came of that because I knew perfectly well that I was really genuinely in love with my husband.

So we just sort of bided our time and in September of '28 he flew out. My birthday is in September and he flew out to San Francisco. That was the famous flight where he hopped, skipped, and jumped across the continent. He flew out then for that reason. There's a funny story that we all laugh about now because he brought me a birthday present and it was an umbrella. My family never got over teasing me that he was so conservative that he brought me an umbrella because an umbrella was not very compromising. [Laughter] It was a very safe gift to give me! They teased him and teased him about that. They've teased him since and they teased me at the time: "Well, that's a fine beau you have! All he can give you is an umbrella!"

JCF: But he came out. His sister, Eleanor, had had her second child and he came out to see her and the baby and to see me. Then he went back to work in New York.

Then it was in October of that same year, the following month, that my mother decided to go to Europe and we went East. One promise I had been able to elicit from her was that she would not go straight to Europe. Of course, you went by train in those days; you didn't fly. It was a long trip and you went on by ship. So she promised me. My uncle was in business, and he was on a business trip to New York at the time and my mother was delighted to visit him, to be with him in New York and see some theatre and that sort of thing. So she said, "I'll let you stay in New York for two or three weeks before we sail." It was while we were there on that visit that his brother-in-law became ill and they sent for him to come home. I to this day say that I think it was an excuse on their part, but maybe I'm doing them an injustice. I don't know. I had still never met them.

It was in between these two episodes that he'd had the experience with his Uncle Herbert saying to Mr. Keller, "Did you not do something that your parents wanted you to do?" And he said, "Yes. They wanted me to marry and I refused to."

So he came out here and Mother and I were due to sail within a few days. We went to theatre and the phone rang when we came home from theatre and it was my husband from San Francisco saying, "Janet, I've talked to my parents and I've convinced them that I know what I want and they have agreed. Will you postpone your trip to Europe and I'll take you on our honeymoon?" And so I turned to my mother, who was next to me, and I repeated this to her and I said, "Will you be willing to do this?" She said, "Is it what you really want? Are you sure?" And I said, "Yes, it is." She said, "Well, if your father gives his consent, I will agree."

So my father was in San Francisco, and I told my husband what Mother had said. He said, "I'll call on your father tomorrow." So I called my father from New York. I found him. He was at a dinner party, but I tracked him down. I said, "Daddy, Morty is coming to see you tomorrow to ask for my hand. Please say yes!" And so that's what happened.

Then he came back to New York and instead of coming to San Francisco, Mother agreed to stay on in New York. We did not announce our engagement. We stayed in New York and the only members of the Fleishhacker family that I met and to whom we announced the engagement was his aunt and uncle who lived in New York and his two cousins,

JCF: now Mrs. Daniel Koshland (she was then Mrs. Charles Henning -- her first husband died) and her sister, Delia Wolf, now Mrs. Ferdinand Kuhn. I met that part of the family in New York, and I had a wonderful time in New York. You can imagine that it was a very gay time for us to be engaged, and nobody spying on us, and having all the fun we wanted, theatres and nightclubs and all the rest of it, during Prohibition days; it was great fun.

Then he came out here in March, or late February. I've forgotten which. We followed within a few days, and we announced our engagement the day after we got here. It was on the day we announced our engagement that I met his mother for the first time.

I forgot to say his father -- we had a little episode that was not a very happy one during the period that he was home in September. The opera season was on and I've always been an opera buff and this young Italian that I spoke of was here, and I went to the opera with him quite frequently. I had a very bad cold and so my face was flushed. I had a fever, and I was quite excited. I was quite excited at the opera and I was with a group of Italians, opera singers and other Italians, and we were all speaking Italian. When I speak Italian I become very animated. My hands go [gestures] and I become very Italian. So, I was standing there and his father was there and he circled around me like a dog sniffing, looking at me (I'd never met him), but just looking at me and looking at me. Of course, it made me very self-conscious. I knew who he was.

So the following day my husband came down to Hillsborough to see me and he said, "You've disgraced me." I said, "What do you mean I've disgraced you?" He said, "You were at the opera last night and you were all made up and you had too much to drink." I burst into tears and I said, "You should know better than that. You've known me long enough to know that I don't own any make up. You know that I never take a drink. I had a fever, as you can see. I was with Italians and you know when I'm with Italians I'm animated. How can you dare say such a thing!"

Well, he was so chagrined at this because he really is such a gentle person, you know. He's the kindest, most gentle man in the world. He felt so chagrined that he insisted upon his father's meeting me. So it was arranged, but with typical father's style. It had to be at the old Tait's at the Beach where no one would see us, in a private room, and he put me through the third degree. But I was just so stubborn. I had enough of my father's blood in me that I wasn't going to let him get away with it and I didn't. I didn't give him anything to put me down with. He tried, but he didn't succeed. So, I had met the father once.

JCF: Of course, as you can well understand, I felt very bitter about this for a very long time, but I have to tell you in all honesty that I adored both of those people. I just loved them dearly and I became very close to them. I was terribly close to his mother, and I think she was very fond of me when she died. Oh, long before she died I think she was very fond of me. But Pop, as we call called him, had some very gentle, warm, sweet facets to his nature and, by the same token, he had some very cold -- I don't want to say "calculating," but very, very cold.

Int: I think his public image was that of an austere man.

JCF: Yes. And still, in the bosom of his family, no one could have been more sweet. Once I had won him over -- I really will say that -- once I had proven myself to him, I had no problems at all.

Int: Did you have a big wedding?

JCF: We had a wedding of, I think, about 150. It was a beautiful wedding. It was in the Palace Hotel, in the French Room of the Palace Hotel, and it was a lovely wedding. Then I had very few bridesmaids. My husband insisted that we be married in the middle of the week at noon so that everyone would take a holiday to come to our wedding. [Laughter] So we were married on Wednesday, May 1, at noon, in the Palace Hotel.

His parents did a very sweet thing. We were going to Europe, but they opened their house at Woodside for the first few days and we went down and spent the first few days of our honeymoon in Woodside. They had a maid who had been in their employ and who used to come back every summer just as an extra person, and she opened the house. When we arrived after we were married she'd strung wedding bells around the dining room. It was very sweet and very nice and we had three lovely days there. Then we went on to Europe.

Int: That is interesting, your husband didn't discuss it.

JCF: Yes, yes. But it's the kind of thing that a man would be very loath to tell. And my father just adored him. He just adored my husband, thought he was one of the finest young men he ever knew.

Int: Did your father get on with your father-in-law?

JCF: They got along very well. My mother and my mother-in-law became quite close, although they were such totally different people. They didn't see each other very frequently, but I think each admired the other. I really do.

PARENTS, CONTINUED

Int: You said that your mother --

JCF: She was the first woman driver in San Francisco, yes. Daddy had among his other interests the first Locomobile agency, and my mother learned to drive. She had a beautiful white Locomobile, and she was quite well known around the community because, of course, it was extraordinary for a woman to drive a car in those days. She used to tell me, and I have a vague recollection of this myself, that she could not crank the car. It had to be cranked in those days. There were no self-starters. So she always left it on a hill in order to get it started. She said when she couldn't park it on a hill -- as I told you before, she was quite beautiful and men always seemed to swoon at the sight of her -- she always managed to find some man to help her out of her dilemma. [Laughter] But her practice was to park it on a hill, which was not difficult to do in San Francisco, and get it started down the hill.

They drove from San Francisco to Los Angeles on their honeymoon in this Locomobile, and I have pictures of Mother in her motoring clothes with the beautiful veil and the large hat and the long motoring coat, and she looking coyly up at Daddy. They stayed at the Hotel Vendome in San Jose the first night, and I remember Mother telling me that when they got to Los Angeles they stayed in Hollywood at the Hollywood Hotel, I think it was called. It was just farming country. It was way out in nowhere. It was just a very, very simple place. That's hard to believe nowadays.

Int: How long did your father live?

JCF: My father lived until 1936.

Int: Was he active all that time?

JCF: Oh, very. As a matter of fact, I used to worry because I felt that Daddy didn't take adequate care of himself. He had a tremendous pride in his physical being. You can see this in the way he rides the horse. He rode a lot. We used to ride. As a child -- I had an enchanted childhood, I must say. As a small child, Mother and Daddy and I rode at the beach every week and we used to go to Tait's at the Beach for breakfast, or the Chalet. Oh, we just had a wonderful life.

Daddy was very proud of his horsemanship and his athletic prowess and his soldier's body and all this sort of thing. But

JCF: he refused to care for it. I mean, he would never see a doctor. He'd never see a dentist. He didn't do anything of that sort, and I worried. As he grew a little older I used to worry about him. Of course, I was awfully young and naive and if he wanted a drink -- now I take more than he usually did -- but I used to say, "Daddy, at your age do you think you should have that extra cocktail?" You know, that sort of thing. He used to say to me, "Janet, if I have to stop doing the things I enjoy I have no desire to live, so please don't tell me to stop." And he must have been about seventy-two, I suppose, when he died, seventy-two or seventy-three years old.

I had come home from a trip and we were going to have dinner with Daddy and Mother. Dad had had a bad cold. I went to the hairdresser and I was sitting under the dryer when I was called to the telephone, and it was my husband calling to say that my father had just had a stroke in his office and that they were taking him to the hospital. And he never recovered.

He lay unconscious for two weeks and I was always very grateful that he went that quickly because he was the kind of a man who would have been utterly miserable if he'd been an invalid. Mother even prayed that he'd go because she knew that it was the best thing in the long run, if he could not fully recover.

So he was right in his office and very active up till the time he died.

Int: Wonderful. Your mother then lived for some time?

JCF: Oh, yes. Mother died in 1969, in January of 1969. Daddy died in '36 in April, and in July of 1936 Mother started off around the world by ship. It took her a year to get as far as England. She traveled all by herself. She went to China. She went to India. She didn't go to Nepal, but she went, oh, just everywhere, absolutely everywhere. As I say, she was an avid traveler. She was in England for the coronation in 1937. When our last son was born, I phoned her in England to tell her that she had a new grandchild, and then she came home and she became restless and she went away again.

While she was away Munich took place. She was in Paris visiting friends, staying with friends in Paris, and the whole Munich episode took place. Mother, who always faced up to reality with her eyes wide open, said, "Whether there's peace now or not, there's going to be war soon and as an American I have no right staying in France

JCF: or staying in Europe and becoming a burden to my own ambassadors or my own government or to the people who are fighting the war. I should go home where I belong." She had no fear.

There was a man, an American man, a San Franciscan, quite a well-known character, who was a great friend of hers. He was in business in Paris and he was a very highstrung, nervous person. He said, "What do I do? What do I do? Shall I go? Shall I leave?" He had all of his business interests, of course, in Paris. And she said, "Well, Charles, do what you think is right for you, but as far as I'm concerned I'm going home." And she told him the story. He said, "Well, I'll go with you." She said, "Well, I have passage from Rotterdam. I'm going up to Rotterdam by train." So she got on the train and he came with her.

He often told the story that she was sitting there knitting. She did beautiful needlework of every kind. And she was knitting like Madame La Farge and he came in and he said, "They've bombed the bridges! They've bombed the bridges!" She said, "Oh, really?" and she went on knitting. [Laughter] They hadn't bombed them. They'd mined them really, ready to blow them up in case of an invasion.

So they got to Rotterdam and, of course, the Munich Pact had been signed, but she'd booked and so she said, "Well, I'm going." He couldn't get passage, but she had a large stateroom and so she said, "Come on." He was of the type that she knew she didn't have to fear gossip, so she said, "Come on. Share the room with me." So, they strung a blanket up in the middle of the room [laughter] and came across the ocean that way. He subsequently went back and stayed there until war actually broke out.

So she remained in San Francisco during the entire war, and she took her own apartment and her brother continued to live with her, her unmarried brother, Nat. The younger brother had married in the meantime, but Nat died a bachelor. All during the war she had the house full of officers and officers' wives. The men were going overseas and she'd keep the wives for months on end and be a mother to them. Oh, she was just marvelous to them and worked at the USO and did all kinds of things.

She got very bored with having to stay put, so she went down and stayed in San Miguel de Allende in Mexico for three or four months, and then she came back, and as soon as she could travel after the war she started off again. Then Korea brought her home. So she was always having to come home because of the wars. [Laughter]

JCF: They were the only things that brought her home! But she loved to travel.

Int: Did she ever go to Israel? Was she interested in the Middle East?

JCF: No, she was not at all interested in that. As a matter of fact, she was in Jerusalem but long before it was Israel and she was in Egypt, Tunis. I don't think she ever got down to the southern or eastern part of Africa. I don't believe she ever did that. She went through the Suez Canal while it was open, but she didn't go down to black Africa. I think she would have been interested in that, tremendously interested in that. She used to get on a freighter and go through the Panama Canal, and she made friends wherever she went, so wherever she was she'd have someone who was glad to see her and would take her in. I couldn't do that. I'm sure I wouldn't be capable of traveling like that, as independent as I am.

Int: That's a wonderful story. It contradicts all the people who say, "Oh, I don't want to go any place; I don't have anyone to go with."

JCF: Yes. No, she always managed to enjoy herself.

Int: Well, that's a very interesting account of your family and your early life. I don't like to keep you talking longer today, but may we come back and ask you about these things here in your curriculum vitae and some others that I know about that I think you've forgotten to list?

JCF: Oh, I'd love it. Sure. [Laughter]

AMERICAN REGIONAL ATTITUDES

Int: I know you've taken part in many activities of your own. Let me suggest a theme. Catherine found a clipping and felt that this was just the thing that applied to you. This was an interview with the Netherlands Consul General Jan Van Hooten.

JCF: Yes, Jan Van Hooten. I knew him very well.

Int: He was discussing San Francisco and said it's a remarkable city for a number of reasons, one of which was that the women give their time so freely to cultural and social welfare causes; there is nothing like that anywhere in the world.

JCF: Well, I think that's characteristically American rather than San Franciscan, don't you? It may be to a greater extent in San Francisco, but --

Int: I think it's to a greater extent in San Francisco. I was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, which was a great city. As a child in school, I can remember one of the first families came to San Francisco every year, and the granddaughter got up in school and told about San Francisco.

JCF: Did she tell about this aspect of it?

Int: Yes.

JCF: That the women were active? Was she that perceptive at that age?

Int: Of course she was probably getting this from her mother. She and her mother lived at the St. Francisc.

JCF: Of course, if you'll forgive me, I'm sure St. Joseph, Missouri was a perfectly lovely, interesting city, but my experience has been that the Middle West, which is typified by the area you speak of, is less this way than the coastal areas.

Int: Oh, that is absolutely true.

JCF: I think you find people on the Eastern Seaboard who are involved and active, and people on the Western Seaboard. I have many friends, for instance, in Seattle and Los Angeles who are perhaps not as active as I am, but who are involved. But I think they are very insular in the central part of the United States. They're not aware of what goes on. And in my experiences with Campfire where I've met people from so many parts of the United States, we in Campfire worked very hard to bring home to our constituents the changes that were taking place with youth today, particularly in the United States. I suppose it's true all over, but particularly with reference to our own children with whom we were working. We were trying to update, as it were, our programs to make the programs a more meaningful thing for the girls who were participating in them. We talked a great deal. I remember at one annual convention we talked a great deal about the drug culture and about the level of noise and the psychedelic colors and all of the influences that were brought to bear on children today. I can remember becoming very agitated because I was on the podium and I was watching the audience listening to this and I could see these Middle Westerners. Actually, the meeting took place in Kansas City, so we had a preponderance of Middle Westerners attending that particular meeting and I could see

JCF: them sitting there and shaking their heads as if to say, "Not with my girls! Not in our city! Not in our city! My girls aren't like that!" And I became so enraged that I woke up at five o'clock in the morning and wrote a whole new speech saying, "Please don't think that this isn't true of your children, because I come from San Francisco and I see your children that you've lost because you have not been able to relate to them. They're seeking something different, so they come out to us and we have our police stations lined with pictures of children who have disappeared." Of course, this was during the period of the "flower children" and all of the children who were disappearing, and it was a tremendous tragedy in the United States to see these children coming under these influences and escaping from this narrow atmosphere in which they were being raised, which did not understand their needs.

I am a very conservative person and I like tradition. I adore tradition, but I still feel we must learn to adjust our ways of doing things to what is going to appeal to the children, and children are sheep; they want to do what their contemporaries and their peers are doing.

So I said to them, "I can go into our police stations in San Francisco and see your children's faces posted on the walls where you've written letters trying to find them, and it's time that you woke up to this, that you've got to reform your programs to appeal to your children and keep them with you."

So, I think this is true throughout our culture that the Middle Western area is not as aware of what's going on in the world and not as concerned.

(Interview #2 - May 21, 1974)

THE THEATRE

Int: Just as there turned out to be a good deal of recent interest in your grandfather, there's a good deal of recent interest in the Temple Players.

JCF: Oh, yes.

Int: You mentioned that the first drama you were in was a Somerset Maugham play.

JCF: Somerset Maugham was the first play we were in, but it was not the first play that had been produced. I think The Dover Road, as I recall, had been produced before I came on the scene. I believe that The Circle by Somerset Maugham was the second production. I'm not positive about that, but that's my impression. I do have a couple of old programs from the Temple Players which I can show you.

Int: I think the famous one that they did was The Dybbuk.

JCF: The Dybbuk was the famous one and it was, if I am not mistaken, the very last one. We did not participate in the production of that at all. By that time we'd been married for some time and we had small children and we were not involved with it in any way except to be interested. Caroline Anspacher was the person who had the lead role and did an extraordinarily fine job. She was a very talented actress. I'm trying to recall the name of the director that they imported to direct that play. Paul Bissinger directed a good many of the plays originally. He directed The Circle, in which we appeared.

Then we were in another play after we were married and before our second child was born. We were in a second play and I'm sorry

JCF: to say I don't remember which one it was. I can't recall the name of it. This second play in which we were was not directed by Paul Bissinger. It was also directed by an import.

Int: Someone from Los Angeles, it seems to me.

JCF: I believe it was someone from Los Angeles. Everett Glass I think was his name. And then there was still a third person, I believe, who did The Dybbuk. My memory doesn't serve me too well on that.

Int: Do you know why that group happened to have been got up.

JCF: Well, I don't really know exactly what it was. I know Paul Bissinger had always been interested in the theatre. I believe he had worked in the little theatre at college, at Stanford. I don't know whether he acted or directed or what he did, but he was primarily interested in the direction and the production of theatre.

I think, as my husband said in his original talk with you, to the best of my knowledge the Temple, Emanu-El, was relatively new.* It had been just, I believe, completed in 1925 and Rabbi Newman was the rabbi and they had this beautiful auditorium with a theatre with a stage and dressing rooms behind and the opportunity to present theatre. I think there was some thought of bringing young people into the Temple life. Many religious institutions do this. They have an activity for the young, and I suppose he looked upon this as an ideal way of doing it and he met with an enthusiastic group of young people who were interested in theatre as such and it was just a happy circumstance that brought them all together.

Int: Were there others in it among the actors and actresses besides Carolyn Anspacher who you remember especially as outstanding?

JCF: Well, I know there were some who went on to professional life. There was a girl by the name of Bea Benaderet who I think had some minor roles if I'm not mistaken. She was not in any play in which we appeared and she went on as a prominent figure in soap operas on radio for a long, long time. I'm trying to think. There was one other who went East. Then there was Charles Levison who was involved in some way. Now, my husband says he doesn't recall his having acted, but I am absolutely convinced in my own mind that he did. As you perhaps know, he became professional. He changed

*The building.

JCF: his name to Charles Lane and is still appearing occasionally. We see him on the television and in movies occasionally, very rarely in movies, but primarily on television now. Then there was Conrad Kahn, who was the son of Congresswoman [Florence P.] Kahn, and he was always interested more in the production end. He is still involved in that end of the production of movies in Los Angeles. I haven't seen or heard from Conrad Kahn in many, many years, but when I have inquired about Conrad I've been told, "Oh, yes. He's still in Hollywood, still working in the same field."

I can remember some of the other names, but they didn't continue an interest in theatre. But Paul Bissinger did, you know. He was a sort of an angel to some plays in the East and his son, Tommy Bissinger, is still in the theatre in New York. This is his life. And then his daughter, Peggy, also went East. She was a beautiful child and always has been a very attractive young woman. She went on to New York and became the private secretary to, I think it was, Rogers of Rogers and Hart, and was with him, oh, until fairly recently. She has since married. She married late. She wasn't old, but she married much later than her contemporaries did. She married a doctor and they live in the East. So their family interest continued in theatre.

Int: And I suppose you and Mr. Fleishhacker have always been interested in the theatre too.

JCF: Yes. Well, that's evidenced by our interest in the ACT, I suppose.

Int: Yes. And I see you've been involved in Children's Theatre Association.

JCF: Children's Theatre Association, and I can remember -- oh, I've been called upon even to this day sometimes to do some minor role at the Temple in some small amateur thing. But for a long time after the termination of our involvement with the Temple Players went out of existence, the Temple put on activities for their own constituency, their own membership, and I was called upon from time to time to participate. I played the role of Esther in some religious festival of some kind. And our children have all been tremendously interested in theatre. Our daughter acted in school. Our sons both acted and were on the private radio station at Princeton. Our son David was in the Theatre Intime, the little theatre at Princeton University. It's quite well known. It's had a great many very famous actors. So the whole family has gone on with their interest in theatre.

Int: Had your parents or Mr. Fleishhacker's been interested in the theatre?

JCF: Oh, they were always interested in the theatre, but not in participating actively in it. I can remember as a child my uncle's involvement with people of the theatre world. For instance, Al Jolson was a very close personal friend of my uncle. I can remember as a child that whenever he was playing in San Francisco he had his Sunday breakfast at our home. And Madame Nellie Melba was a friend of my uncle's, and Nora Bayes and Holbrook Blynn and all of the theatre people of those years. San Francisco was a very great theatre town and my family was always interested in the people of the theatre, yes.

Int: And then you showed us the photograph of your father with Charlie Chaplin.*

JCF: Yes.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Int: I've tried to arrange your activities chronologically. It's hard to do because so many of them continue over such a long period. But next, I thought, the Community Chest involvement began, and that series of organizations which succeeded it. In 1929, I believe, you became active in the Community Chest.

JCF: Of course, the Community Chest was a new concept to me, having come from abroad, and, as my husband has told you, his family was one of the founders of the original Community Chest. He became involved at an early age and I can remember one of my first experiences with my husband -- I think it was after we were married; I'm not certain, but I believe it was after we were married -- was his taking me to a Community Chest luncheon. They had what they called report luncheons in those days where they had a big thermometer and, you know, they involved people very closely with the success of a campaign. He took me to that report luncheon at which my father-in-law appeared on the platform, and my husband had already started being interested in the Community Chest because his father had asked him to. He was soliciting funds and he asked me to participate.

So I became originally involved in the door-to-door solicitation, which was the way it was done in those early days, and for many,

*See p. 310.

- JCF: many years I went from door to door. I don't know whether you know the set-up of the Community Chest at that time. They had women's groups and they were assigned certain neighborhoods, and we went from door to door and actually rang doorbells. I did a great deal of that over a long period of time, and then within a very short time I was asked to serve on committees.
- Int: In doorbell ringing, were people asked to take their own neighborhoods or other neighborhoods?
- JCF: They were simply assigned to specific neighborhoods that had nothing to do with where they lived.
- Int: I see, so that you were not calling on friends.
- JCF: You were not calling upon friends at all. As a matter of fact, most of our friends were in a different category of giving anyhow -- in my case, that is. That wasn't true of everybody who solicited. But we went into some pretty unpleasant neighborhoods. I remember soliciting all along Divisadero Street and literally ringing doorbells and asking. We had cards. We were given cards with names on them, but if you didn't have a card and there was an address you rang the bell. Then you had what they called stop cards, which were the people who were in a different category, and you were not supposed to solicit them. They were a different colored card. Mrs. Jones' name was on it if she came under a different category.
- Int: Would that mean she sent in a larger contribution in the mail?
- JCF: A larger contribution and she was solicited by someone who was in a different branch of the solicitation.
- Int: I see. Were you as a young woman, as a bride, expected to take on community welfare duties and responsibilities?
- JCF: I suppose I was expected to. I wasn't conscious that it was an expectation. I had a kind of a desire to participate and it just seemed the natural thing to do. I just became involved immediately. I was asked as a bride to serve on certain committees, and I selected those that interested me and did.
- Int: What other committees were you asked to serve on?
- JCF: Well, I went at a very early age -- I think I was married a very brief time when I went onto the board of the League of Women Voters. My sister-in-law at that time was already on the board and I think

JCF: it was due to her suggestion that I was asked to become a member of that board and I did.

Int: She was --?

JCF: She was Eleanor Sloss, Mrs. Leon Sloss in those days. I don't think she was the person who actually invited me, but perhaps it was she who suggested my name, and I went onto the board of the League of Women Voters. Mrs. Pat Brown* was on the board at that time and Julia Porter, Mrs. Charles Porter, who is now on the Planning Commission with my husband, was on the board, and at one time during my service on the board she was the president of the board of the League of Women Voters.

Int: Do you keep meeting the same people in activities?

JCF: Oh, yes. I think one finds the same people over and over again. Of course, some of us, our paths have run in different directions, and others we continue with the same interests. I am no longer involved with the League, although I was until very recently, two or three years ago. I kept up my interest in the League. I served as chairman of several committees and on committees of the League. Then my philosophy and the League's parted company at a certain point and I decided to drop my interest in the League.

Int: Do you want to say what the point was?

JCF: Well, perhaps it shows me up as a shocking conservative or reactionary, but I felt that they were going along a direction which didn't appeal to me too much. The thing that I liked about the League as far as I interpreted it then and interpret it now was that they at that time and for many, many years and till a very recent date were primarily an educational organization. Their function was to inform women on all matters pertaining to legislative matters and on issues and to take a stand on an issue only after a great study in great depth. I feel now that they're espousing causes without sufficient study and that they're supporting candidates, which was always against the policies, and that they've become a little bit more partisan than they pretend to be. They have taken stands on issues that I've completely been in disagreement with, so I just felt that I no longer ... Although I've supported them until just this year; I've remained a member and supported them with an additional contribution. But this year when I was solicited, I wrote a letter saying that I no longer care to do so and setting forth my reasons.

Int: What other activities have you had that have been over that long a span?

*Mrs. Edmund G. Brown

JCF: Over that long a span? Well, actually, I started at a very early age in Campfire and, as you know, I dropped that for a period of time. When my children were grown I then went back to it and became more deeply involved than ever.

Int: How did you happen to? I gather you started before you really had any children of Campfire age?

JCF: Oh, yes. Interestingly enough, none of my children have ever been members of Campfire, nor my grandchildren. I suppose they've never had any need for that type of activity. They had so much offered to them.

Int: And they had Woodside.

JCF: They had Woodside and they had other things to do, so they never seemed to need the program of Campfire, although I still think it's a program that's designed for everyone. But, you know, those were the days before the Volunteer Bureau. Now we have the Volunteer Bureau and we've had it for a very long time. I don't believe I've mentioned to you that I have been on that board as well. But before the days of the Volunteer Bureau most of us went on committees or became involved in activities because our friends asked us to do so. If it was something we liked we stayed with it, and if it was something that we became bored with we got out of it.

I tried very hard to pick and choose those activities in which I became involved, and decided when I was quite young that since I had small children and I loved young people and loved children that my primary responsibility was to devote myself to activities that had to do with children. That was the reason I served on the auxiliary of the Youth Guidance Center and the family and children's service of the Jewish Welfare Organization. I tried to concentrate on children's activities.

THE YOUTH GUIDANCE CENTER

Int: The Youth Guidance Center is a city organization --

JCF: Yes. The Youth Guidance Center is a city organization. It is something that was developed under the aegis of the Juvenile Court. In the old days the children who came in conflict with the law or who were dependent upon the law for protection were sent to the Juvenile Court and were housed in a building on Otis Street, which is still in existence, I don't know for what use. It was the May T.

JCF: Morrison Rehabilitation Center, but I'm not certain that it still is.

But at any rate, I was brought into the picture, oh, well along in my life, but nevertheless when I came into it Mrs. Fred Bloch, who was Mr. Bissinger's sister [Helen], incidentally, had been a probation officer, which was quite an unusual thing. I don't know whether she was actually called a probation officer, whether that was her technical title or not, but I know that she was sort of an assistant to the court for many, many years. It was quite unusual. It was an unpaid job, as I understand, and she was very dedicated to it and very interested in it. She became quite concerned over the extremely poor housing and the crowding in the building on Otis Street.

I believe there was a bond issue voted in San Francisco for the building of a facility for better courts and better housing for these children. As I say, there were two categories of children and there still are: the children who were in actual conflict with the law and the children who became wards of the court because of some family situation in which they were considered neglected children.

The chief probationary office of the Juvenile Court at that time was George Ososke. He was largely responsible for the building of the facility that is now known as the Youth Guidance Center. The name was changed. "Juvenile Court" carried an onerous feeling to it, so they changed it to the Youth Guidance Center.

Then Mrs. Bloch and Mrs. Marshall Madison, and I think Mrs. Frank Fries was also involved in the planning of an auxiliary which would be a purely volunteer group that would augment and supplement the work of the Juvenile Court because there was no Body -- and I say "Body" with a capital "B" -- no group that had the responsibility of seeing that these children had really anyone to look after them and protect them and provide the necessities of life that they lacked. So it was on that basis that the Youth Guidance Center was formed and I was asked to go on the original board of that auxiliary, Women's Auxiliary of the Youth Guidance Center.

Shortly after it was formed, the move was made to Woodside Avenue, where it now is. Of course there has been a great deal of controversy about that building and I think with great justification. I have to confess that I was shocked, at my first visit before it was actually occupied, at the physical layout of the building.

Int: It looks like the worst of Bauhaus.

JCF: Well, it's more than Bauhaus. The exterior doesn't distress me as much as the interior, quite frankly, because I am a very outspoken person and I did speak out at the time. When we were taken into the courtrooms, which we were shown with great pride, my reaction was, "I wonder who got the lighting contract?" because the number of very expensive lighting fixtures in the courtroom were to me shocking. I felt money could have been spent to much greater advantage in another way.

The living quarters were extremely barren and bare and cold. Of course, I recognize the fact that when you take children who have been in conflict with the law, something must be done to protect yourself against them and to protect themselves against one another. But it was a very -- have you ever visited the rooms, the buildings?

Int: No.

JCF: They have separate quarters for boys and girls and there was nothing that could be destroyed by the children because this type of child is a destructive child. But there was nothing either to build up a sense of quality or a sense of refinement or a sense of trying to strive toward something better. There was a central desk surrounded by bars so that the children couldn't get at these people and, well, the whole thing was a very distressing thing.

Then they had the rooms, separate buildings for the so-called neglected children, the children's cottages they called those, and they were a group of cottages. They never referred to them as neglected children, but that was what we knew they were. And again, it was very distressing to me to see those poor little waifs, some of them infants in cribs, brought in and stuck into these high-barred cribs -- of course, for their protection they had to be in high-barred cribs so that they couldn't fall out -- and just left crying, dozens of small children in diapers and with bottles, crawling or incapable of crawling yet, who were just left there crying, their noses running, wet. It was just the most miserable kind of a thing. And there was no one provided to give them any comfort or any ease. They were very under-staffed. They still are terribly under-staffed.

My first involvement out there was with the children's cottages where we tried to bring some little ray of light and hope and happiness to those children. I know I used to go out and read to the children. They'd never seen a book! No one had ever read nursery rhymes to them or held them in their lap or played with them. They had little courtyards which were supposed to be playgrounds,

JCF: but there was no planting, no toys, nothing for them, so they were not used. As you know, that area can be terribly cold and windy, so the children were rarely out of doors and it was a very pathetic situation.

I haven't been there in many, many years. I always support them and send money to them, but I'm ashamed to say I haven't gone out there. But my understanding is that it's no better. If anything, it's worse.

Now, the auxiliary has done a magnificent job. They've organized. They did when I was already a member. I'm not saying it because I had anything to do with it; it was the group as a whole that did it. The one thing that distressed me terribly -- and I'm disgracing for a moment -- and again because I was so frank I expressed myself in no uncertain terms -- was that this so-called auxiliary had no authority to criticize the manner in which the children were dealt with. We were what was purported to be an auxiliary to augment, but we were not allowed to go into the court. We were not allowed to advise with the probation officers or with the judge. We were not allowed to make any suggestions as to the needs of the children.

When they said that the chapel needed furnishing, they had a very fine committee of ladies who were religiously inclined, of all faiths, who worked very hard to raise the funds and to approach the various denominations in the community to furnish that chapel with all the religious things that were necessary for them. And they said, "Auxiliary members are to escort the children to chapel at the proper time."

Then there was a library committee which provided books and went out there and saw that the children were provided with books. But it was no advise and consent situation. We were not allowed really to make any suggestions and this distressed me. But the auxiliary did do and still does a very fine job. They provided Christmas for the children and they still collect new things all year long. There is a very dedicated group of women who make up these packages of gifts for the children at Christmas time and at other times.

And then they have interested, of course, other people -- hairdressers and dancing teachers and other people -- as they have done in so many of the public facilities in the city, to go out and participate.

Int: You mentioned the Volunteer Bureau. Do the Volunteer Bureau people work with the auxiliary members?

JCF: Yes, they do. You see, the Volunteer Bureau, which I think is a very remarkable organization, was started by the Junior League, as you know. The Junior League was responsible for starting the Volunteer Bureau and, of course, this is a concept that's long been accepted all over the United States and San Francisco's is a very fine one. It's staffed by some professional staff and some volunteers and they have a file of all or most of the volunteer agencies in the community and the public agencies as well, not only volunteer agencies. But nowadays, instead of waiting for your friend Sally Jones to say, "Won't you come on a committee with me?", if you feel that you want to volunteer for some kind of activity you can go to the Volunteer Bureau and put in an application and they question you very thoroughly as to your interests and your skills and your age and everything pertaining to you as a person and then they tell you what is available. By the same token, if the Youth Guidance Center feels that they have a need for a specific type of volunteer, they put in their name at the Volunteer Bureau, so that it's a cross-filing. They try to place people in situations to which they're most suited and in which their interest lies, and most of the agencies in the community use the Volunteer Bureau.

Int: And you said that you were instrumental in establishing the Volunteer Bureau?

JCF: Well, I personally was not instrumental in establishing it, no. I was not a member of the Junior League and it was the Junior League that established it. But after it had been established a few years I was asked to go on the board of the Volunteer Bureau and worked on committees and at the office.

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Int: I see you've been on the advisory board of the Junior League.

JCF: Yes, that is correct. That is a group of citizens in the community who meet with the president and the officers of the League and any problems that they have they advise with them.

Int: Have ever any young Jewish women been in the Junior League in San Francisco?

JCF: Well, it's a very interesting thing that you should ask me that because my daughter-in-law was the first Jewish girl to ever be a

JCF: member of the Junior League and the story about it is a very interesting one. The Jewish community always rather resented the fact that the Junior League of San Francisco did not have any Jewish members. We heard rumors that there was a certain group of young women in the Junior League who felt very strongly that this was a terrible mistake on their part and that the Junior League should change its policy.

A few years ago our daughter-in-law, Frannie Fleishhacker,* our son Mortimer's wife, who is a very remarkable young woman, came to us and told us that several of her good Christian friends had approached her and told her that they were quite concerned over the fact that there were no Jewish members in the Junior League, and they wanted to propose her name. They asked her if she would be willing to allow her name to be proposed as a possible member, and they explained to her that it was one full year between the proposing of a name and the accepting of that individual and that the fact that her name was proposed was no guarantee that she would be accepted and also that she would have to get some people or sponsors to co-sign with them. But that was no problem. They had plenty of friends who were more than anxious to do so.

So she came and she asked us what did we think about it. Did we feel that it was a wise thing for her to do? We pointed out to her that there were two facets to the question, that as Jews we felt we had no right to criticize any organization or club or anything else for not allowing Jews to become a part of them if they offered us the opportunity and we refused to accept it; the criticism was not a valid criticism. [Tape off for telephone interruption.] I was saying that we said the other side of the coin was that she had to recognize the fact that it was a long procedure and that it was very possible that she might be rejected and she had to be willing to accept that rejection in good stead, and that also she ran the risk of coming in for very serious criticism on the part of her Jewish friends for having done something that no one else had done.

Her reply to us was, "I feel, if you agree, that if I am going to be a guinea pig and they can assure me that this is an opening bridge for others if I'm accepted, I'm willing to come and take the chance." So we all agreed that this would be the procedure and her name was presented and she was admitted without a dissenting vote.

*Francoise Fleishhacker. See also pp. 311 and 390.

JCF: As a result of that, there has been at least one Jewish girl admitted to the Junior League almost every year since, and Frannie herself has just gone what they call "sustaining," which is the older group, after having served two years as the treasurer of the Junior League and having done an outstanding job and having been one of the most popular members of the board. So I think it's a nice story.

Int: Very. The Junior League has done many very good things.

JCF: I am a great admirer of the Junior League. I think the Junior League is one of the most outstanding -- at least so far as San Francisco is concerned; I'm not too familiar with what they do in other communities -- but I think it's one of the outstanding training grounds for leadership in women. I think it's better than the League of Women Voters, as a matter of fact. Some of the finest leaders in our community have gone through the Junior League and they're innovative in every way.

Now, the Junior League has always had a reputation for being rather social and restricted in its attitudes, but this is not true at all. They've been involved in a project at Hunters Point with the black community which has been very innovative and very productive. It's been a thrill to me to see them attend, which we have done as well -- there is an annual party now that is given called the Emerald Ball, which is done by the black community of women. There's a women's group, Links, that gives what they call an Emerald Ball to raise funds for the girls' club at Hunters Point, and the Junior League has helped them develop this fund raising activity and participated in it because they took on the girls' club at Hunters Point as a project of the Junior League. I have attended those balls and seen the Junior League members present at those balls after having been at dinner parties and entertained the black community in their homes and sitting down at the table at the ball, and Junior League women dancing with the black husbands and the husbands of the Junior League women dancing with the black wives. I think this speaks very well for the Junior League.

Int: It wouldn't have been possible in 1929.

JCF: No, it certainly would not have. And this is true of the Junior League in every respect. I think they do a very innovative type of thing. They study their programs in great depth and they take a long time to determine -- they have a very large budget. I know that.

Int: Have there been Jewish women's groups who have done anything similar to that?

Int: Community activities outside of Judaism?

JCF: Outside of the Jewish. Well, now you've asked me a question that I'm not sure I can answer. I really don't know. I think you'd have to find out from -- of course, the outstanding Jewish organizations have always been liberal. They've always been supportive. But whether they've actually actively participated in things I couldn't tell you. The Council of Jewish Women I think would be able to answer that question for you and some of the Sisterhood Guilds of the various congregations perhaps could answer it for you, but I don't really know of anything.

Int: You spoke of a children's welfare organization.

JCF: The Jewish Family Service Agency.

Int: And that was confined to work with Jewish families?

JCF: With Jewish families, yes. My son is now serving on that board, where I served on it originally. That was the placement agency for the children who went to Homewood Terrace and into foster homes, and dealt with the family problems of the Jewish family. They did other things as well, but I became involved in it because of my involvement with Homewood Terrace.

Int: And Homewood Terrace was for Jewish children?

JCF: Homewood Terrace was for Jewish children, yes. They did have children of mixed marriages there, but there had to be some Jewish blood in the child for him to be accepted at Homewood Terrace. I don't know if that's still their policy or not.

WORLD WAR II JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

Int: These organizations -- were they called upon to make special efforts during the period when so many Jews were coming out of Europe before and during the Second World War?

JCF: Oh, yes. The Jewish Family Service Agency was very involved in that, very involved. They did a great deal. All of the Jewish agencies worked with the Jewish refugees from Europe. I'm not sure whether it was the Jewish Family Service Agency, but I believe it was, that had a training program for primarily the wives but also the men. They

JCF: trained them for domestic service. Many of these women went into domestic service because it was the only thing they were equipped to do and they had to earn a living. I know that my husband's cousin, who has passed away since -- she was then Miss Samuels. She married Mr. Richard Frank and then she died. But Margaret Samuels was the director of that program; she set up a whole series of training courses for these people and a placement agency for them so that they could go into homes as domestics.

There were many. The Jewish Welfare Bureau, I think it's called -- I'm ashamed to say I'm not too familiar with the technical names of the Jewish agencies, but all of them were involved in that, every one of them, yes.

Int: Were individuals also involved? It seems to me I remember hearing of many individuals who personally sponsored --

JCF: Oh, yes. Many, many, many. Of course, many of the Jews in the community had relatives, distant as they might be. They had some kind of a family connection in Europe and somehow or other those people communicated with these families here, either through an agency or because they knew of someone who was related to them remotely, and many of those families sent funds abroad to bring them, to sponsor them and bring them to this country. They gave them money to set them up in business, gave money to find housing. They all were involved in helping as many as they possibly could. Others who didn't happen to have any family gave money to the cause itself to help others that they didn't know.

Int: Are there many people in San Francisco now who came here during that time?

JCF: I think there are a great many.

Int: Was there an important part of the community added at that time, or did they just sift into the rest? Do you have any idea?

JCF: Well, I think you can say yes and no. I think that there are many people who are very actively engaged in the community. For instance, Dr. Arnold Oppenheimer, who is now dead, was a psychiatrist. He was a very, very remarkable man, a great friend of our family's. He was very devoted to Mother Fleishhacker and Mother was very devoted to him and so were all the rest. He was a refugee from Frankfurt or Mainz -- I'm not too sure which -- and he had had a very lucrative and very fine position and profession as a psychiatrist in his native land. He was the first one of his family to come out, and he brought

JCF: his two boys with him. I think they went first to England and then he came to San Francisco. He'd brought his boys, and his wife remained in Germany for a long time after, I think even after hostilities began, and she finally came over to this country. She's still alive and living in San Francisco and the two boys are outstanding young men. One, Franz, is the lawyer with a very fine legal practice in Washington D.C. and a practice that is international in scope. Rudy, the younger son, is an outstanding urologist with a practice in Santa Rosa. Interestingly enough, both married Gentile girls and they to this day have strong accents, but they married girls of outstanding Christian backgrounds and fine families. They're very outstanding young men.

Of course, the tragic part for the doctors and for the lawyers as well -- lawyers could not practice their profession. It was impossible to be admitted to the California bar without training in California law and in American law. Doctors had a slightly different situation. The medical profession is the medical profession, but there were rules and regulations which they had to follow and as you no doubt know they all had to return to training as residents, and some of them interned in our local hospitals before they could get their license to practice. So a man of the stature of Dr. Oppenheimer, for instance, and Dr. Eugene Ostwald, who has practiced with a very fine practice in San Francisco and retired only about two years ago and lives in San Francisco, had to go and train in the hospital; and they had had outstanding practices in their own country.

Now, you asked (getting away from the medical profession) the Fromm family, which is so prominent in the wine business -- they were in the wine business in Germany and they are all refugees, and they are certainly prominent in the community. I could think of many others, I'm sure, but that's just off hand.

There's Mr. Scheuer. I'd like to mention his name because I think that's quite an interesting story. Mr. Scheuer has a linen business which you may know on Stockton Street.

Int: Oh, yes.

JCF: Well, Fred Scheuer was a very young man when he came with his parents and they had been in a similar business in Germany, I believe in Frankfurt. They were brought out by the same members of the family who brought Dr. Oppenheimer out. They were related in some remote way. They were cousins; I don't know how close, but they were cousins.

JCF: Mr. and Mrs. Scheuer practically trod the streets with suitcases of linen and rang doorbells. They didn't literally ring doorbells. They got names of prominent Jewish families and called and asked for permission to come and sell linen. They did and they worked themselves up to the business that they now have which the son has inherited, and it's a very fine business.

They really robbed their country of a great deal of talent not only by exterminating some Jews but having others leaving.

Int: Yes. Certainly the United States gained.

JCF: Yes, the United States gained. Of course, we know about the scientists and people like Einstein and people of that calibre who came over here.

THE SALESIAN BOYS' CLUB

Int: I think we have wandered from your activities with youth organizations and children, but let me ask about the Salesian Boys' Club.

JCF: Oh, yes. As you know, I've been always dedicated to everything that was Italian. I have a great fondness for the Italian people, and I again was asked to go on the board of the Salesian Boys' Club and I don't believe that there were any women on the board at the time that I went on it. I was the only woman, so it was rather an amusing experience with me. But I'd been dealing with Italian men all my life, so I didn't find that too difficult.
[Laughter]

And then Claire Giannini Hoffman came on the board also and we were the only two women who served, and since then they've had other women serving. It's a very fine organization.

Int: Are the men mostly Salesian fathers or are they lay people?

JCF: Oh, no. They were lay people. It was Father Larry Byrne who was a Salesian father, and he was the spiritual advisor to them and a remarkable man. He had been a Marine chaplain in the war and he was a very energetic and vital person. But the athletic director and the director of the club itself is a lay person, a man by the name of Fred Scolari, who himself had come up through the ranks as a member of the Salesian Boys' Club.

JCF: The Salesian Boys' Club has changed somewhat in character since its origins, and it was in the process of changing even while I was on that board because it was primarily composed of children of Italian origin, not necessarily second generation, but children whose backgrounds were Italian, and living in that North Beach area. But, as you know, the North Beach area itself has changed considerably and there's a very large Chinese population there and I would say that at least fifty per cent of the membership of the Salesian Boys' Club is now Chinese.

Int: It had earlier been sponsored by Italian community members?

JCF: That is correct, yes. Mr. Charles Paganini was one of the sponsors and Mr. Angelo Petri, Louis Petri's father, and well, all of the names that you can find in the roster of old Italian families in San Francisco were involved, and some of their sons are still active.

Int: So it was in a state of change when you were --

JCF: Well, the primary change when I went on it was the fact that they finally allowed women on the board. [Laughter] It was very interesting because it is a fine organization and anything I say is not intended to be derogatory. But they were very old-fashioned in their approach to philanthropy of this kind and to community activities. They didn't understand, this was a thing that I always tried to bring home to them, the necessity for being part of the community as a whole. They sort of went their own way and they didn't collaborate.

They were a part of the Community Chest. They were supported by the Community Chest, but they didn't have a true concept of what the Community Chest was and the necessity of meeting with the youth organizations of the Chest on a comparative basis to exchange experiences and to perhaps change their program and be helpful and influential in changing other programs so that they would be working towards a modernization, in other words, of youth activities. This they never did.

The focal point of the Salesian Boys' Club is the basketball. They have always promoted a great deal of basketball and they've been very successful because some of the children who were products of the Salesian Boys' Club went on to the University of San Francisco, which had a very famous basketball team, or to the various Catholic institutions in the community and they played basketball. So it was a natural outgrowth of this. They always thought that the greatest product they had was keeping the children healthy in mind and body by good sports.

JCF: But Father Larry Byrne was a remarkable man and he had a wonderful rapport with the boys, and I think Fred Scolari did too. They were able to counsel them under the guise of maintaining a sports program. They also put on a very fine show every year and, of course, this is the kind of activity that's good. But it was more recreational, and development of the child through the recreational process. It is not terribly contemporary in its concept.

ITALIAN CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Int: This leads into all of your Italian-American activities. Did that make you kind of an unusual young woman to be so interested in Italian culture?

JCF: Well, yes. I suppose in those days it was unusual, plus having come back from Europe and having had several Italian beaux and having spoken Italian and developed such a fondness for everything Italian. I sought out the Italian community and early on, long before I was married and I think even before I met my husband, I had met some Italians in San Francisco. I know that I met a young, young man by the name of Rino Lanzoni who was in the decorating business and had a shop where he kept antiques and Venetian glass. My mother, as I told you, was a very outgoing person and she walked into the shop one day and talked to him and learned that he was a newcomer to San Francisco and that he'd come out here because Mr. Templeton Crocker had encouraged him to come. He'd met Mr. Crocker in Europe and Mr. Crocker had encouraged him to come to San Francisco and helped set him up in business.

At any rate, my mother met him and they chatted and compared notes and we found some mutual friends or acquaintances in Italy. I went in and met him and we became friends. My mother was very hospitable and she invited him home to have dinner with us and all. Then he, of course, had known others in the Italian community, in the more, shall I say, intellectual aspect of the Italian community, because it's sharply divided. There are what I call the North Beach Italians, as you know, who have come from simpler backgrounds and who are not interested in artistic and cultural things, but Rino was.

Then he introduced me to Gastone Usigli, who became a very well known musical conductor. He came from a very distinguished family in Venice. Gastone died very tragically a few years ago. But one

JCF: of the things I didn't mention was that I was the president of his Chamber Music Orchestra Society.

Int: Was this the one headquartered at San Francisco State that was sponsored by a man named Frank de Bellis?

JCF: No. That's a whole other story in which I was very involved.*

At any rate, I have scrapbooks and I have pictures of myself taken with Gastone, in 1932 and 1933. At that time Gastone was a young musician here in San Francisco, having to struggle, but nevertheless a very fine musician and, as I said before, he came from a very distinguished family. We subsequently met his mother and brother in Italy and they were very, very distinguished and charming people.

Then at about that time the Italian government promoted an exhibition of Italian books, books that were published in Italy in Italian, fine bindings, fine books, called La Mostra del Libro, which is "The Exhibit of Books." It was held at the Civic Auditorium and I was asked to take charge of helping to set this up and of getting the decorations for the auditorium. I don't know why or how; I can't remember why I had the influence. By that time I was married. Perhaps through Uncle Herbert,** who had something to do with the San Francisco Recreation Commission, or I haven't the foggiest notion, I managed to get greens from the park and we decorated the place.

It was a very exciting exhibit. It went on for about a week, and I was very active in that. Miss Esther Rossi, of the famous Rossi clan in San Francisco, was part of that group, and from that stemmed the Italy-America Society. It was called the Italy-America Society. The Cenacolo had already been formed. Have you heard of the Cenacolo?

Int: Yes.

JCF: A good many of these men -- Mr. Salvatore Reina, Lorenzo Turco -- are still active in it. They were all in the Cenacolo, and Rino Lanzoni was a member of the Cenacolo. They used to meet regularly at lunch at the Fairmont Hotel and they used to read and discuss

*See pp. 350-355.

**Herbert Fleishhacker

JCF: cultural matters.

They decided that they wanted to put on a play of Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author, and they asked me to act in the play. So I acted in the play, in Italian.

This was all a very happy group of people. No, it couldn't be after I was married. It was 1927 that this happened, and '28 It was before I was married.

Int: Was the Ghirardelli family interested in Italian things?

JCF: Not to my knowledge. But you know they had come up from South America.

Int: So early -- 1849.

JCF: Yes, so early -- although subsequently they were. Mrs. George Washington Baker, who was a Ghirardelli, was interested in Italian things, but her husband went to Rome with Mr. [James D.] Zellerbach when he was with the Marshall Plan, and Mrs. Baker went, and then they became interested in Italian things after that.

Int: Did women have any other part in the Cenacolo?

JCF: No. Women were not a part of the Cenacolo, no. The Cenacolo is purely a men's group. This was a very special thing that we were having this play, and they often reminisce about it. They still say to me, "Oh, I remember this in Cenacolo. You've been involved in Cenacolo for so long."

So then the Italy-America Society continued until the war, and with the advent of the war, of course, we were at war with Italy and it just faded out of the picture. The then consul general, Marchese della Rosa Prati his name was, married Virginia Phillips. Are you familiar with that story?

Int: No.

JCF: Well, the Marchese della Rosa Prati came from a very distinguished Italian family. I don't know what part of Italy it was. He may have been Venetian, but I'm not too sure of that. He was the Italian consul general in San Francisco and he fell in love with and married Virginia Phillips, who was one of the great beauties of San Francisco. But at that time under Mussolini no diplomat was allowed to marry a foreigner unless she became an Italian citizen. So Virginia Phillips didn't think anything about it.

JCF: She renounced her American citizenship and became an Italian citizen. Of course, with the advent of the war they were out and they had to go back to Italy. The Marchese della Rosa Prati is dead, but to this day Virginia Phillips has never been able to regain her citizenship, and she lives in Canada and she only comes down to San Francisco very occasionally on a visit. She was here recently. I didn't see her, but I do have friends who continue to see her and tell me she is still very beautiful and very wonderful. But she cannot come back to the United States. She cannot live in the United States.

Int: Did she ever live in Italy with her husband?

JCF: She lived in Italy with her husband. As a matter of fact, I'm not certain about this, but I believe she was there during the entire war. Her brother, Grattan Phillips, was a very charming man and a friend of mine and a friend of my mother's. He continued to live in San Francisco and he married a classmate of mine, as a matter of fact, from Hamlin School, Gloria Vandenberg. He has passed away.

But to get back to the Italy-America Society, it just went out of existence.

THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR ITALIAN CULTURE

Int: Did Italy's political shift have any immediate effect upon this organization or the remains of the organization?

JCF: No, it did not. The reincarnation, as it were, of the Society came about long afterwards. It came about in a rather odd way and this takes us to the whole de Bellis story, which is a very long and complex one, and I'll try to make it as brief as possible.

Int: Please tell it.

JCF: The first consul general in San Francisco following the war was a delightful man by the name of Barone Filipo Muzi-Falcone. His wife was an Irish girl, Marian, and they came out to San Francisco and opened the first consulate after the war. They lived first in Sausalito, and then they subsequently found the house which is now occupied by the Italian consul and they moved in there.

JCF: Marian was a very dynamic, very fine, vital person, full of activity. Filippo was a much quieter person, but also very, very popular. They did a great deal to re-establish good relationships. Of course, Americans never really felt any bitterness towards Italy. They always felt that the Italians were kind of children who were led by Mussolini and carried down a rosy primrose path, but I don't think there was ever any real animosity towards Italy as a whole, so it was a comparatively easy thing to do. And, thanks to the charm and the diplomacy of these two individuals, the relationships were re-established.

One day, Marian Muzi-Falcone -- we were very, very close friends. We had many mutual friends in Italy and we became very, very close friends. They would go skiing with us all the time. Their children were part and parcel of our household and we were very, very devoted. One day Marian called me and she said, "Janet, we have a lunch date today and I want to ask a great favor of you. Would you mind very much if I brought Frank de Bellis along?"

I have to confess that the name Frank de Bellis meant nothing to me. Apparently I had met him at their home, but I didn't realize it and I said, "Certainly not." She said, "He has something he wants to talk to us about." So, in fact, he came and we drove over across the Bay to Alta Mira* and we had lunch and I was very confused because I didn't know what this strange gentleman had to talk to me about.

Then he put before me a plan that he had for the founding of an organization under his aegis to which supposedly he was making a grant of \$90,000. He had a collection of incunabula and records of Italian music and all sorts of things of Italian interest, and this was his great love in life. He wanted to contribute this to a foundation which would be the seat of Italian-American exchange of culture and it would be, he envisioned, at a house that he knew of on Broadway, which would be the headquarters of his organization, and that students would be able to come there and congregate and have access to all of his material, which he was donating to this foundation, this organization, and so forth and so on.

By that stage of the game I was old enough to know that one had to be wary and not immediately say, "Yes, I think it's marvelous. I'll participate." So I said, "I think it sounds like a wonderful

*In Sausalito

JCF: idea, but my first reaction would be, 'How does the rest of the Italian community feel about it?' because I think this must be something in which the Italians should play a very important part. I also would have great respect for the opinion of Mr. Zellerbach, who has just returned from his long experience in Italy with the Marshall Plan, and if he approves of such a thing I would be in favor of it."

He let it be known in a subtle fashion that he was going to raise funds among the American community as well, and I was not prepared to give any of my money or my husband's money without knowing exactly what I was getting myself in for.

So Marian was pushing very hard for this, and she subsequently told me that it was just the greatest thing in the world and we should support it and so forth. Almost immediately thereafter the Muzi-Falcones were notified that they were to be moved from San Francisco. They'd been here eight or nine years or maybe more and they were, as a matter of fact, going back to Italy at that particular point. There was a new consul general coming and there was a party given. It was a farewell party for them and a reception to the incoming consul general who was Pierluigi Alverà. He was not a bachelor. He was separated from his wife. He had his two children with him and he was coming to be in the consulate.

So, at this party several people prominent in the community -- Mr. Thomas Carr Howe Jr., Mrs. Henry Potter Russell, Mrs. Walter Haas, Mr. Zellerbach, I think Mrs. Robert Watt Miller -- came up to me and said, 'What's this that Marian's talking about? What's all this business with Frank de Bellis and what does she want of us?' I said, 'Well, I don't know. They want us to join this organization.' And each one said to the other, 'Are you going to do it?' 'Well, if Marian wants us to, I suppose it's all right.' And each one of us did it because the other fellow was going to do it because Marian had asked us to. We really didn't know what it was all about.

Well, all right, we got into it and Marian left. Frank de Bellis called me and said, 'Can I come to see you? I want some advice,' and I said, 'Certainly.' So he came to see me and he spent a couple of hours here and he told me that this thing was wonderful. He had this marvelous house that he had bought, and he had this enormous list of potential members, and he wanted to have a fund-raising activity to get this thing on its feet and get it started. He proposed having an opera in the Opera House if he could get Maria Callas to sing. He didn't want to charge too much. He wanted to

JCF: charge about ten dollars for each person to come and listen to Maria Callas sing, and this would raise all this money.

I said to him, "Well, Mr. de Bellis, you're asking my advice and my advice is that that's not the way to raise money. My experience has been that with stars of the calibre of Maria Callas you spend more getting them here than you could possibly raise. They ask a very large fee." He said, "No, no, no! She'd waive the fee." I said, "All right. Granted, she may waive the fee. I don't know. I'm rather skeptical about that, but if she did, I've dealt with these people before and I know that they insist upon all their expenses being paid and they drink the champagne and they invite guests and they overstay their leave and they telephone long distance and they want their fee paid for their travel expenses -- and it amounts to a great deal of money. And then you have to recruit people to sell tickets. It's a very arduous thing to do and not very productive."

Well, I had great difficulty dissuading him, but we talked at great length and finally he said, well, he knew what he would do. He would give a reception at the foundation house during the opera -- I said, "During the opera season that's fine. It's almost here. It's about to start. It's always a welcome way; people like to meet the stars. By all means, give a reception and invite the opera stars." He said, "And I will have them perform." I said, "Now, wait a moment. Opera stars do not perform unless they're given some kind of compensation. They resent being asked to a social engagement and then being asked to sing for their supper. You can't do that." He said, "Oh, not at all, not at all! I'm sure they'll do it for me."

Well, then the invitations went out. He composed the list of guests and I was amazed. He sent out thousands of invitations. My husband I were due somewhere else but because of my involvement in the thing I went. We stopped in for about a half hour and all of the people I mentioned and everybody who ever was anybody in San Francisco was present, and Mr. Alverá came.

The next thing I knew Mr. de Bellis was asking the stars to sing and some of them got up in front of the piano. Well, it was a crowd of about 1,000 people and nobody stopped to listen. There were no seats provided. There was nothing done to attract the attention of the audience, so that the opera stars were singing and the background noise was so great you couldn't hear a thing, and the opera stars were furious. The audience was furious because they felt they were being pushed around. There was no room for anyone. And it was an unholy mess.

JCF: I went away very disillusioned at the way Mr. de Bellis had handled this thing, but thought nothing more about it except that he'd made a mess of it.

A few days later, Mr. Alverá called me and said would I come over to the office. He wanted to speak to me about something in connection with this. The American Foundation for Italian Culture was what it was called. So I went over to the office and he said, "I was very disturbed at the mess that Frank de Bellis made of this thing. It was shocking! It was a disgrace! And I have written him to tell him so." He handed me a letter which he had already sent to Mr. de Bellis. In Italian the letter was and when I read the letter I said, "Mr. Alverá, you cannot write a letter of this kind. It isn't done." He said, "Why not?" I said, "Well, in the first place --" In the letter he objected very strenuously to the fact that he, as the consul general, had not been introduced or called upon to make a speech. This was his principal resentment. He said in the letter, "As your consul general, I want to tell you, you do this. And as your consul general, I want to tell you that. You must do such and so." And then he told me that Mr. de Bellis was furious, livid with rage.

I said, "I don't blame him. In the first place, you don't write letters of this kind to anyone. If you have something to say to a person, you ask for an appointment and you look him straight in the eye and you tell him what you think. You're not his consul general. Have you ever been posted to the United States before?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, my word of advice to you is that being posted to the United States as consul general is a totally different thing from being posted to Switzerland or to Scotland where you have your own nationals for whom you are responsible who are there on a temporary basis working. The Italian-Americans of San Francisco or of any American community have become American citizens and they are very proud of having become American citizens. They are proud of their fatherland, yes, but they are even more proud of having achieved American citizenship and they do not consider you their consul general. You are not speaking for them. Mr. de Bellis is an American; he is not an Italian, and you have no right to speak to him in this vein."

I then found out that under the arrangement with the Muzi-Falcones Mr. de Bellis was to be paid and to have certain expenses paid for being the cultural attaché of the Italian consulate, and it was under this cover that this had all taken place.

Well, I won't go into any more detail except to say that this became a cause celebre because Mr. de Bellis was so enraged that he

JCF: wrote to the American State Department, the Secretary of State. He wrote to the Italian ambassador. He wrote to the newspapers in San Francisco, publishing all of this, accusing Pierluigi Alverá of all kinds of perfidy and everything bad. It became a cause celebre.

We also discovered that in the by-laws of his American Foundation for Italian Culture he had misrepresented to us completely as a board what was expected of us. He had not bought the house for \$90,000. He had taken a mortgage on it and he expected all of us to pay off the mortgage, which we had not been given to understand at all. So, of course, all of us on the board took the side of Mr. Alverá even though we thought he was wrong in dealing with it in this particular fashion. We felt that his cause was correct and that Mr. de Bellis was completely out of line. We had many, many, many meetings over the thing. It was a very serious matter. It went on for many months.

But the final outcome was that we asked Mr. de Bellis to relinquish his chairmanship of the board, which he refused to do. He had a mistress. It's for the record, so it doesn't really make any difference. He was married and he had a mistress whom he was paying as the vice-president and secretary of the American Foundation for Italian Culture. I said to Mr. de Bellis and to Mr. Alverá too, "This may be done in Italy, but it is not the kind of thing that one accepts in the United States. It's not proper." Perhaps nowadays it would be accepted, but then it certainly was not accepted, and I said, "The whole thing is wrong."

So the final outcome was that Mr. de Bellis resigned and the board of directors remained intact. We had the articles of incorporation under the state of California. We had the tax exemption under the state of California and we were the constituted board of directors, so we remained in office and Mr. Zellerbach became the chairman of the board. After a short time we changed the name to the America-Italy Society of San Francisco. You thought I was never going to get to the America-Italy Society, but that's how it became reconstituted. It became America-Italy rather than Italy-America in order to not have any relationship to the fascist organization, or the one that was organized during the fascist regime. Did I make that clear to you?

Int: Yes. Some of this I remember. Mr. de Bellis then subsequently gave his collection --

JCF: He subsequently gave his collection to the San Francisco State

JCF: University, and the Foundation building was sold to Stuart Hall.

Int: Oh, the building on Broadway. I see. What was Mr. de Bellis' background?

JCF: I don't know. Oh, yes. He was a Sicilian, I understand. I don't really know very much about him. As I tell you, the first time I ever heard of him was when Marian Muzi-Falcone introduced him to me. But apparently he was well known in the community and I gather that he had a very popular radio program on which he played Italian music.

Int: Yes, on KPFA.

JCF: He refused to accept any culture other than the old Italian music. He was very borné -- the French word means "with blinders on" -- narrow-visioned about this.

As I say, there was a cleavage in the Italian community. The people wouldn't even speak to Frank de Bellis because of this. He lost the support of all the people I've mentioned, and many of them dropped out of the America-Italy Society too, but some of them are still involved.

THE AMERICA-ITALY SOCIETY

Int: What has the Society then done subsequently?

JCF: Well, subsequently, of course, we've had an uphill struggle because some of the presidents have been very interested and others have been less interested. Some have become involved. There has been not always a meeting of minds on what our program should be. I was always extremely active in it because I felt that we had been formed to develop inter-cultural relations between Italy and the United States and that we should do things which promoted this. I felt for a long time -- and since we'd lost our building -- that we should have some kind of headquarters. We started out by renting an office in the building which houses the Alliance Francaise and the Cercle de l'Union in the Native Sons and Daughters Building. Space happened to be available, and we felt that because there was sort of an international feeling about the building that it was an ideal place. It was centrally located and it was our hope that people would drop in, and that men would drop in on their way home and read the Italian

JCF: periodicals. We would have records on hand for them to play and so forth, and we would present programs there to which they could come easily at five o'clock as they do in the World Affairs Council and other such organizations.

Mr. Lanzoni helped us decorate the thing as modestly as we could, but we got contributions of furniture and things and we decorated it. We had as a secretary Fifi Ferruolo, who is the wife of Professor Arnolfo Ferruolo, who is still in the Italian Department of the University of California and a very good friend of mine. I see him very frequently. They had just arrived in San Francisco at that point and she was looking for something to do and we asked her to be our secretary. She sat in that office day after day after day and not a soul came near her. It was the most frustrating experience.

We organized a showing of contemporary Italian paintings which we garnered from people in the community who had contemporary Italian paintings, and Mr. [Thomas Carr] Howe from the Legion of Honor helped us to get someone to hang the paintings in our headquarters. And we did get people. We offered them a cocktail or wine or something, and they did come to see the paintings. Very few of them had any interest in contemporary art and it didn't mean anything to them; it was just a disaster because few people came. The Italian community didn't show any interest in it.

Subsequently, because we were paying a high rent and we were paying a salary to a secretary that was practically nonfunctioning not through any fault of hers, we gave up the headquarters and then we worked out of offices, out of Mr. Petri's office and out of my home and so forth. Over the years we have presented receptions for prominent people that have come to the community. I had what I thought was a very brilliant idea -- I still think it was a brilliant idea, but it didn't work -- to have a show of Italian art from the Renaissance to the contemporary. My theory was that we have three museums in the community, one dedicated to the Renaissance, one to the eighteenth century, and one to contemporary art. I got the complete compliance and agreement of the curators of all of the museums, the directors of all of the museums, to present a show. The Legion of Honor* would have had the second chapter, which is the eighteenth century art. The de Young was perfectly willing to do the Renaissance things. Grace McCann Morley was then director of the San Francisco Museum and she was very happy to present the contemporary things.

*California Palace of the Legion of Honor

JCF: At that time we were going to Italy and Mr. Zellerbach was in Italy. He was chairman of the America-Italy Society during the period between the Marshall Plan and his ambassadorship, and he left when he became ambassador and went back to Italy, and he was in Italy as ambassador at the time. We knew him very well and I through him gained access to the minister of culture and education in Italy. I had a long visit with him and I presented my idea to him. I had it all drawn up very carefully. He agreed and nodded his head and said it was a wonderful idea but there wasn't a chance in the world of Italy sending us any art. It was shortly after the Andrea Doria had sunk. They were very nervous and apprehensive about any works of art coming out of Italy and it was just impossible to do it. But I still think it's a good idea.

Int: I hope some day it will work out.

JCF: I hope some day we can realize it. It has been many, many frustrating years of trying to interest the Italian community in cultural affairs.

Pierluigi Alverá was very active. He was a very difficult man and I had many arguments with him, but he did promote many of these things. He would somehow or other get people to put up the money to put on concerts. We did concerts of Italian orchestras coming through and some Italian singers. Mrs. Tobin Clark, the mother of Mrs. Alexander Albert who had that beautiful "House-on-Hill" down in Hillsborough, was very supportive of Mr. Alverá and gave money for a concert in her home, and we did things of this kind from time to time.

Then when Mr. Alverá left we never had another consul general who really pushed to the extent that he did, although Mr. [Alessandro] Savorgnan was as helpful as he could be. But it was always an uphill climb to determine just what kind of a program we could present.

Now I am president of the organization and Mr. Robert di Giorgio is the chairman of the board, and we think we're started again on an upgrade, but it's a slow process.

Int: Mr. Petri is still involved, Louis Petri?

JCF: Louis Petri -- well, I don't like to say. I'm very devoted to Louis Petri. He's not well. His wife has been very, very seriously ill and I'm very fond of Louis. But Louis Petri is one of those delightful men who couldn't care less about culture. He really doesn't have any concept of what it is. His theory about the

JCF: America-Italy Society was always, "Well, when somebody important comes to town we'll give them a reception." But I just don't feel that that's the purpose of our existence. I think it's nice to do that occasionally to keep your membership involved and interested, but it's not the purpose of the organization, and if that's the only reason to stay in business then we should disband. So we have been giving lessons in Italian cooking, which have been great fun, and I have been participating in them with great enthusiasm. We have classes in Italian, both basic Italian and Italian conversation.

Int: Where are these held?

JCF: Well, they're held in different places. The basic Italian classes are held in the home of the teacher, Mrs. [Paola] Bagnatori, who is a professor out at San Francisco State, and she is a wonderful teacher. The lessons in Italian conversation are being held in the home of the individuals. There is a group of people and each person lends her home or his home for a particular occasion. Then they go out on trips around the city and they maintain a conversation. That's being conducted by Mrs. Squadrili, who is the wife of the acting consul general. She is a young woman and a bride of just a year or so. She is a charming young person and they are all most enthusiastic about that.

Then Professor Ferruolo this spring conducted seminars on the Italian Renaissance, and that was so enthusiastically received that we had more people arriving each time for it and he has promised that he will do a seminar on Machiavelli this coming fall. Then we had a showing of the original drawing of the Mona Lisa. The original sketch from which Leonardo da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa was available to us and we presented it to our membership at a private dinner and showing, and then we obtained the use of the rotunda of the city hall on a Sunday when the city hall was not occupied and we opened it to the public free of charge.

Then we had a reception for Licia Albanese last September when she was in town and things of that kind. We just keep trying to find everything we can do to keep our membership interested and growing.

Int: How many members have you now?

JCF: Oh, very small. We have about 145 or 150 members. We gain a few members each month. Oh, yes. Another thing we have done. We have reincorporated as the America-Italy Society of California. We have a second branch. Professor Fredi Chiappelli, who is the

JCF: head of the Department of Medieval and Renaissance Studies in the University of California at Los Angeles, is the executive vice-president of the Society. Mrs. Howard Ahmanson of Los Angeles is the chairman of the membership committee in Los Angeles and they have had their own programs down there.

We also made a \$10,000 grant for three scholarships, two to the University of California in Berkeley and one to the University of California in Los Angeles, for graduate studies in Italian, and our grantees are just terminating their year of scholarship. We gave \$5,000 to Berkeley and \$5,000 to UCLA. The young man who was the recipient of the scholarship in Los Angeles has just been appointed associate professor at UC Davis. So we feel that it was well worthwhile. We have plans to give scholarships for a group of teachers with studies in Italian in the high schools in San Francisco. So it's a small effort, but we're continuing with it.

(Interview #3 - May 31, 1974, Place: Woodside)

WORLD WAR II VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Int: By the time World War II came along you must have been very active in many organizations.

JCF: I can't even remember them all, I'm afraid.

Int: Am I correct that you were active in the Red Cross?

JCF: I was active in the Red Cross. I was not as active as some others. I wasn't as involved as others. But my activity in the Red Cross came about because war had already begun in Europe and I was very conscious, of course. With a somewhat military background, I always was a great patriot and always was concerned and foresaw that we would probably be in the war at least. I even hoped that we would.

There was a Red Cross headquarters opened on Sutter Street about next to where the Marine Memorial Club now is. It was then the Western Women's Club, but there was a large building next door and there was a Red Cross headquarters. Before we entered World War II they started recruiting volunteers for an expanded program and I took lessons in first aid because I thought it was important to be familiar with first aid. I was fascinated by it and apparently did quite well and then they asked me if I would care to be an instructor, which I was very happy to do. I was an instructor in first aid during the entire war and instructed such people, for instance, as the military. I went out to the Presidio and instructed officers in the officers quarters out there and instructed enlisted men. I went down to Fourth Street where many of the enlisted men were housed and I gave lessons in first aid for the entire war.

As a result of being involved in the first aid section of the Red Cross, I became what was known as a staff assistant. They had

JCF: various categories, with the motor corps and the various categories of volunteers, and I was in the staff section, which was somewhat clerical in its work, and I have always enjoyed things of a clerical nature. So I worked at the headquarters and did a lot of clerical work for them, which was a question of keeping records and the usual clerical things.

And then, really, I think the most interesting two things that I did during the war had to do with my Red Cross activities. One was that at the end of hostilities, at least at the end of the reconquest of the Philippines, you will remember that the people who had been held prisoner of war, the civilians who had been held prisoner of war in Santo Tomas and in the various camps in the Philippines -- there were not many military left in the Philippines in the prisons. They had all been transported off to Japan. But the civilians were freed from their prisons in the Philippines and were brought back through San Francisco. The ships came in and they were processed through Letterman Hospital.

So there was a whole group of us that was sent to Letterman Hospital to assist in the processing of these people, and it was a very exciting and very moving and very discouraging thing to see these civilians who had been prisoners of war and had suffered such unmentionable hardships, and then their families who were trying to get in touch with them and all of the emotional things that went along with that.

Following that, when the hostilities actually did come to an end and our own prisoners of war were released in Japan -- Santiago, I think, was one and then there were all the various prison camps in Japan and on the different islands that were under the control of the Japanese -- they also came through the Port of San Francisco and we were also involved in processing them through Letterman Hospital. This was a very, very moving thing and also a disheartening thing because so many of the men had been on the Bataan death march and their families knew nothing about them. They had no knowledge of whether they were alive or dead and, of course, many did not come back. The Letterman Hospital was absolutely inundated with families who had come across the continent from all over the United States in an attempt to find their boys or to at least find some information about their boys. They were just absolutely overwhelming us with requests to see and talk to the boys who had been in the various regiments with which their boys had served. They were going into the hospital and saying, "Here's a picture of my son. Do you know him? Have you seen him? Do you know where he is? When was the last time you saw him? Is he alive? Is he dead?" It was a frightfully moving thing.

JCF: It became quite complex, so much so that we had to develop a process whereby this could be done without disturbing these returned prisoners. They had been through so much themselves that it was terribly difficult for them to have to be put through the agony of talking to parents of other boys about it and families of other boys. But it was to me a terribly exciting and rewarding experience in World War II.

My other experiences of World War II, of course, were not connected with the Red Cross at all. They were connected with the army.

Int: And what were they?

JCF: I was the supervisor in the radar room, in what was called the filter room, of the Aircraft Warning Service for the entire war. Again, I had volunteered as the result of an advertisement in the paper for volunteers to be trained in aircraft warning service. We had not entered the war as yet and a group of us friends went down and were trained in the whole process of answering the telephones and plotting out the flights of planes and so forth. You're familiar with what that was, I'm sure.

Int: Yes. I was in a spotting station and probably phoned your office.

JCF: You probably did. So you know what it was.

We were to report for maneuvers, as they called it, on the eighth of December, which was a Monday. They didn't set a Sunday for us to go to work, but we were to report for maneuvers on the eighth. Of course, on the seventh we reported and were on active duty and, as you remember, we all wore gas masks. We all carried gas masks to and from for many, many months. I was on the early morning shift which meant that I got up at five and I worked from six to twelve about four days a week. I was there every day. I even commuted from down here to work in the aircraft warning service.

Int: Where was it?

JCF: It was in the Stock Exchange Building. They took over the whole top of the Stock Exchange Building, not the club, but they took over a whole section of the Stock Exchange Building. It was extremely interesting and exciting, but I must tell you an amusing story. I don't know whether it's historically interesting or not, but to me it is because it kind of shows how stubborn I am.

JCF: I worked there for, oh, about a week, the first days of the war, on what was called the Radio B board. No one told us what Radio B was. We hadn't heard the word "radar." It was not mentioned. It was a very secret device, as you know. We were on this Radio B board and then all of a sudden we were notified that they were no longer going to have women or civilian volunteers working on the Radio B board. It was going to be completely manned by the military personnel, which was fine. We were told to go home and that we would be notified when positions came up for which we were required.

We all went home and within days everyone with whom I'd worked had been called back except myself and I was quite distressed about this. I called them and I said, "Don't you want me back?" They said, "No, we'll let you know. We have plenty of volunteers. We don't need you, but we will call you." I let that go for a few days and then some of my friends said, "I don't understand why you haven't been called back. There have been advertisements in the paper for more volunteers and I know we're understaffed and I know they want more volunteers. They're asking us to get them, but they've never called you back. You must have done something terrible that they don't want you."

Well, of course, this infuriated me and I went down. I decided I decided I was going to find out about it so I went down to see Colonel Sampson, who was the commanding officer of the installation, and he was busy. He couldn't see me. I went back three or four times and then it became obvious to me that he wasn't going to see me. He had no desire to see me. This made me all the more angry.

My husband had not yet gone into the war and he said, "Oh, forget it. You'll do something else." And I said, "No, I'm not going to forget it. I'm very upset. If there's something wrong, I want to know what it is." So, I went down early in the morning and I camped literally on the doorstep. I sat in the outer office of Colonel Sampson's office from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night and I said, "I will not leave this room until Colonel Sampson has seen me."

So he finally talked to me. He said, "What is it?" And I just told him my story. I said, "You know, if I have done something wrong I want to be told. I'm sorry. I did not do it intentionally. But even a soldier has the right of a court martial and to be told what he has done, to be charged with what he had done that is incorrect. I will stand corrected and if you don't want me that's your business, but I want to know why. I think I have that right." And he finally said, "Well, you know, these files out at the Presidio are G-2 and you can't get them and we have no access to them. We were simply told you are persona non grata."

JCF: Well, this enraged me! I said, "My father was an army officer and my country is the most precious thing in the world and I have to know why." So he finally said, "Well, I'll do the best I can, but I can make no promise." I went home and stewed for about three or four days and one day I got a call and it was Colonel Sampson. He said, "Mrs. Fleishhacker, I want to make an apology to you. I have tracked this down and I have discovered that in looking through the files they pulled somebody else's card out of the file, not yours, and you may come back at any time that you wish." I said, "Colonel Sampson, that is all I want to know. I will come back at my own pleasure, but I at least have my name cleared."

And I purposely stayed away for about a month and then I went back. I became the supervisor of the filter room and I stayed until the end of the war, worked on the radar.

And, you know, since then I've been so grateful. Morty and I have talked about it and he said, "You know, you were so right to have done that," because it could have jeopardized his position and then maybe it could have jeopardized my appointment to the DACOWITS committee, which I subsequently was. It could have done so many things to hinder us and I think it's terrible to not have your name cleared. If you're in the wrong then certainly you should be punished for it, but I had no awareness of having done anything wrong and I was bound and determined I was going to find out what it was.

Int: What was the DACOWITS committee?

JCF: That was the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

Int: And what was that?

JCF: Well, it still exists. I mentioned what the letters stand for, DACOWITS, and it is an advisory committee of fifty women. Now, when you say fifty women it sounds as though there was one from each state, but it is not determined in that way. They are citizens of varying interests with certain public service backgrounds, civic leaders, and professional people of all kinds who are appointed by the Secretary of Defense in an advisory capacity to the Department of Defense for everything pertaining to the women's military services -- and there are nine women's military services, which most people don't realize. They are appointed for three years. It's a three year term without any reappointment involved.

JCF: It's an extremely interesting committee on which to serve, and I enjoyed every minute of the three years in which I served on it. You go East to Washington and then you meet in the Pentagon and you meet a great many interesting people, and then you travel around the country and visit military installations and you act in an advisory capacity in everything pertaining to the women's services.

Int: What period was this?

JCF: During the Eisenhower administration. It was not a political appointment.

Int: How did you happen to be appointed? Do you know?

JCF: I don't know how they go about determining who is appointed now, but in those days they used to ask for recommendations from former DACOWITS members, from various civic bodies, and from the military itself. My name was recommended to them by someone.

Int: I see. The war, then, had fully occupied you.

JCF: Oh, yes indeed. I was raising three children besides.

Int: With an international background such as you had, did you feel yourself to be in a special position during the war, or, as you say, was your United States patriotism so overriding that it --

JCF: I believe so. I felt very sad that we were at war with Italy because I had such close attachment to Italy and I never really felt that the Italian people were at fault for what had happened. I felt that they had been ill advised and that Mussolini had been very stupid in the way he had acted, but I never carried any bitterness against the Italians. Of course, I did have terrific dislike and hatred of Germany. I have changed my attitude since, I must admit, but during my youth and my early years I was not particularly fond of the German people. They were people that did not appeal to me. Of course, when Hitler came along and all the atrocities of Germany and the war and the rest of it, my normal, instinctive dislike of the German people was just enhanced because of it. Since then I have learned to be much more tolerant and much more understanding. I like to go to Germany. I enjoy visiting Germany and I have German friends of whom I'm very fond, so I can't hold that against the people.

The same thing was true of Japan. I loved the Japanese people, but of course we all grew to dislike them and distrust them during the war, which was perfectly natural. But, no, I don't feel that I have any divided loyalties at all.

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION MEETING

Int: It was just before the war was really over that the United Nations organization meeting was held in San Francisco and you were a participant.

JCF: Yes. Well, that was again a part of my Red Cross thing, which I hadn't really thought of in those terms. But when the plans were being made for the United Nations conference the Red Cross was asked to assume the responsibility for the ushering in the Opera House. You remember that the conference was held in the Opera House. The staff assistants were the group of volunteers who were given that responsibility and we were very carefully trained. I remember that the Red Cross was very strict. Your uniforms had to be very neat and you had to wear white gloves and we were very, very fussy about our behavior and our attitudes.

I was in the fortunate position of being assigned the responsibility of the center door, the main door of the Opera House, through which all of the important dignitaries came. It was very exciting. I stood on my feet sometimes thirteen hours a day because we were not allowed to sit. We had a fifteen minute break occasionally when we could go and sit down in a corner where we weren't observed, but we were on our feet during the entire conference and I still can stand for hours on end as a result.

But it was so fascinating! We had to keep everyone out without proper credentials. This was very, very tight security. Being at the center door, I felt terribly important. I was young enough to still feel that that kind of importance was necessary [chuckle] and saying, "No, you can't come in," and "Yes, you can" was just a lovely feeling.

But it was tremendously interesting because in the first place, as you know, I'm interested in languages and I'm interested in international affairs. So I would stand and listen to the speeches and be absolutely fascinated by the immediate translation. It was not simultaneous translation in those days. They did not have the phones by which they give simultaneous translation. When a delegate spoke, and spoke sometimes at great length, often at great length, there was an interpreter (there were several interpreters for all of the official languages), and immediately the interpreter would rise to his feet and give the entire speech over again in his language, whichever it might be. Of course, I couldn't follow the Chinese or the German, but the French was so marvelously done and the Spanish was so beautifully done that I was absolutely

JCF: fascinated listening to the brilliance of the interpreters expressing exactly -- not only verbally, but the whole thought, the whole sense of what was being said. I enjoyed that.

Then I enjoyed the privilege of seeing Mr. Molotov every day and having him recognize me and say hello, and Ibn Saud and Mr. Stetinius and, well, I could go on and on. You know, the people who attended that United Nations conference all came in through that center door and they got to know me very well. I felt terribly important and I loved it. I really enjoyed it.

I have kept all of my souvenirs. I kept a little list of -- you see, again, a pack rat -- of delegates and officials of the United Nations conference. [Looking through material.] Newspaper reports, the blueprint, even the commission reports in English, the provisional text of the charter and so forth. I kept them all at the end because I thought some day --

It was a very inspiring occasion and gave us such tremendous hope for the future, and I still have hope for the United Nations. I think it's unfortunate that it's been watered down extensively by the numbers of smaller nations that have equal power. Of course, I'm not trying to put them down, but I do feel that there's a lack of balance in the United Nations now which unfortunately does not tend to make for peace in the world. But in those days everybody was so hopeful of the future and it was very inspiring, very exciting.

Int: Were you interested in the formation of the state of Israel in any special way?

JCF: Never. Well, I say that so categorically, and perhaps that's wrong for me to say. No. State of Israel, no. I was tremendously interested in seeing that the people who were the victims of all of the terrible hardships in Europe during World War II have a place of refuge to go to, but an entity like the state of Israel never occurred to me, never, and I'm not at all certain that it was the correct thing to have done.

THE INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY CENTER

Int: Then from that time forward you were quite active in hospitality to foreign visitors.

JCF: Yes. I joined the International Hospitality Center. It's twenty years old now, I think, or something like that. I joined it at the beginning and went on the board about ten years ago.

Int: What was the inception of it?

JCF: I'm not too certain of what the inception was. I know that a man by the name of Tommy Davies was interested. I really couldn't tell you. Mr. [S. Marshall] Kempner, whom I'm sure you've met, had a lot to do with its formation. There was a whole group of people, but I really don't know what brought it into being. It was already in existence when I became involved.

Int: What were its principal functions when you did become involved?

JCF: Well, very much the same as they are now, except that they've been enlarged because it's a larger organization. We have more volunteers. We have more demands made upon us. But the idea was really to give a sense of America, a sense of what America is all about, and a good feeling for America, to visiting foreigners from other lands. We still do that and I think we do it very successfully.

Int: What is the range? Do you welcome unimportant as well as important visitors?

JCF: Oh, yes indeed. The question of importance is rather subjective, isn't it?

Int: Yes. [Laughter]

JCF: The people who come are usually referred. We have, if you want to say, "important," because I don't like that term in this context -- but so-called VIP's. We do have those who are referred to us by the State Department and for which we perform certain services. We also have such people as Eisenhower grantees who are sent to us, and Fulbright scholars, various government agencies who have people coming through at their invitation who are making studies in the United States. They are usually, most frequently, students of one form or another, sometimes mature adult students who are already established in their own countries and governments or something, but

JCF: students of one kind or another of the American scene. Then we have a whole student (in the true sense of the word) program in that we have a young student service organization that meets the incoming students from foreign countries.

Of course, in San Francisco most of them are coming from Asia or South America. They meet them at the airport and process them through the airport so that they are put on the transportation towards the colleges or institutions of learning to which they are assigned. Sometimes they are in need of home stay. We provide the home stay for them. If they want some sightseeing, we provide sightseeing for them. Then at Christmas time some of them come and we provide holiday hospitality in homes for them, all that kind of thing. Those are just ordinary students. At my age, they're children.

So we have those two categories of people, in addition to which a visitor to the community can very well, if he knows about it, drop into the International Hospitality Center and ask for help and we're delighted to give it to him. We've now collaborated with a program known as Americans at Home, which is similar to the Danes at Home -- it originated in Denmark, I think, in Copenhagen -- where we have certain people who are willing to take visitors into their homes, and we provide that service as well.

There are all kinds of services, but the basic precept is to give foreigners a sense of what America is all about in any way we possibly can. We take them on sightseeing tours. We take them to our homes. If they have to visit a university or a hospital or a public service agency of some kind or whatever it might be, we provide the transportation to it. We don't make up the program but we enhance the program by enabling them to get to their destination. For instance, if somebody is supposed to see a person at Stanford University, let us say, for example, who is in the department of medicine or whatever it may be, then we will try to find the proper person that they should see unless they have a name already. If they have a name already we will call them and make the proper arrangements and the appointments and see that they get there and that they're brought back, all that type of thing. It's very rewarding.

Int: You must have to recruit people who are good in foreign languages.

JCF: We try to have people who have some familiarity with foreign languages. Surprisingly enough, it isn't always necessary because so many of the people who come over here on trips of this kind are already familiar enough with English to be able to do it. But, of

JCF: course, sometimes they're not that familiar with the language and they welcome someone who speaks their own language.

Our volunteers are very, very remarkable people because they spend their own funds for the food they offer them, for the gasoline that they use in their cars. Everything that they do is completely done on a volunteer basis, and in order to be a volunteer you must be a member of the International Hospitality Center, which is an annual dues in addition. So the people who are volunteers are, I think, very, very fine people and they're of all ages and all backgrounds. They're not necessarily affluent people. We have people who live in very simple homes. They love to have their visitors -- and this is done very frequently -- come into their homes and go into the kitchen with them and help them cook and help them wait on the table, and this shows them an aspect of America they're not familiar with. They don't realize that the average American woman is capable of doing this kind of thing. They think of us in terms of Hollywood and great affluence and servants and all that kind of thing, and it's wonderful for them to realize that the American home is not that way. And it's a wonderful experience for the families. The children of these families get to know foreigners, to know them at their own level, and it's a two way street. It really is.

Int: And you've been on the board of that?

JCF: I'm executive vice-president at the moment. I think my husband mentioned to you when he spoke to you about a special job that I have. I am chairman of what is known as the Consular Corps Hospitality Committee, because we learned a few years ago that the incoming consuls to the various foreign consultates -- very often their wives arrive and they're completely lost and some of them are here without ever getting into an American home or meeting an American. It's rather sad to think of that. Of course, of the more sophisticated countries that isn't so. They're all invited everywhere and they have no difficulty. But many of those from the Asian countries and South American countries never get to know an American. They're too shy and they're too inarticulate, and the wives don't always have the language facility. So we decided that we would form this committee, and it works very well.

We are in touch always with the dean of the corps, which changes every year, but we have a good rapport with the consular corps. The secretary of the corps is notified when the change takes place and he cooperates with us very well. At every change in a consulate we are notified: "Such and such a country; So-and-So has arrived.

JCF: His wife's name is Such-and-Such. She speaks English or she doesn't speak English. She has so many children or she doesn't have any children," or whatever it is.

Immediately the consul general himself is written to by the president of the International Hospitality Center telling about the center. Sometimes they're bachelors. If they are they are written to and nothing further is said. But if they are married men the letter is written to them telling them about what our functions are, and saying, "Your wife may be interested in our ladies' hospitality committee and in a short time she will receive a telephone call from one of our volunteers to see if she can be of any assistance to her."

This is my responsibility. I'm chairman of that committee. I have a whole group of special people with special skills in language who have volunteered for this particular job, and I find someone, try to match age and interest and so forth, and arrange for her to call. Then the lady in question receives a letter, so she's forewarned. Hopefully her husband has gone home and said, "You may be hearing from the Hospitality Center," and then she herself receives a letter saying, "Dear Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Smith is going to call on you and so forth and we hope we can be of service."

Our volunteers are very carefully briefed as to what they should do, and they call and they say, "I'm from the International Hospitality Center. Could I call on you? Could I come to see you? Would it be convenient?" Then they offer whatever service they can. They may want to know where to take their child to the pediatrician or what school to go to or where to shop for Mexican food. There are all kinds of questions that they ask -- where to look for houses, or who's a good caterer, because so often they arrive and immediately there's a national day or something and the husband has to give a party and the poor women are lost. They don't know what to do. Any service at all that they can render.

If they get a kind of a cold shoulder and they are given to understand that the lady is not interested and doesn't care, we never force it. They say, "Very well. This is my name. This is my number. If I can be of any help to you, please don't hesitate to call." But our volunteers promise that if they do call the volunteer will invite the lady to her home and will have another American friend for coffee or tea, morning or afternoon tea or coffee, take her for sightseeing, do whatever she can, and see that the friend also invites her. This is an entree, and some very warm friendships have developed as a result, and it gives them a nice

JCF: feeling of what San Francisco hospitality's all about. It's worked very well.

Harroun: Is this a program that is duplicated in other cities in this country?

JCF: There is an over-all service called Co-Serve, which is housed in Meridian House in Washington D.C. and that is the coordinating agency for all such groups. I think San Francisco Hospitality Center was one of the very first in the country, but there are several others around the United States, yes. I don't think the services are necessarily duplicated. They are similar in nature, depending upon the particular need. But I would venture to guess that San Francisco is among the busiest because we are a city that is very much in demand. The foreigners ask to come to San Francisco. We are a port of entry for many people coming from abroad. So we are quite busy. The coastal cities, I suppose, and places like Chicago and New Orleans are also very busy cities.

Int: You mentioned when we were last speaking that you had served as interpreter for at least one foreign government representative.

JCF: It was the King of Morocco, King Mohamed V. I suppose that was more happenstance than anything else. Mohamed V happened to be here on a visit and he didn't speak a word of English. I don't even remember who it was -- I suppose it was the Hospitality Center -- I can't remember whether it was the Hospitality Center or the World Affairs Council or the State Department or who it was that called me up and said, "Will you be his interpreter?", which I was delighted to do, and it was a very interesting two days that I spent with him riding in his car and sightseeing and doing everything with him.

Int: How long ago was this?

JCF: Oh, gosh. I don't know. I suppose ten years ago. I don't really remember.* It was the father of the current king.** This young man was with him too and he was a naughty boy. He was too busy having a good time to be very interested in what his father was doing. But I remember that very well.

I am often called upon to go with foreign visitors who don't speak English, to be a French -- not technically an interpreter, but

*1960. JCF

**Hassan II

JCF: to accompany them on trips around the city. I remember the chief justice of the supreme court of Senegal, who didn't speak any English, a charming black man and his wife, and we had a lovely day together. Often that happens -- Italian or French or Spanish. My Spanish is mediocre, but I can always manage in Spanish. It's fun. I enjoy it enormously.

Int: Do you then sometimes call upon them when you're in foreign countries?

JCF: Well, we have occasionally. They always say, "Be sure and let us know," but I am rather hesitant to just ring up cold and say, "Here I am." [Laughter] I know lots of people who do it, but fortunately we have friends in so many countries that I'm not really dependent upon them. But I very much enjoy visiting in foreign homes and I think Morty does too. Meeting people abroad makes it a much more enriching experience for you.

Int: I believe Mr. Fleishhacker indicated that he was a kind of fast sightseer, while you were a settling-down sightseer.

JCF: [Laughter] Oh, that's been a constant bone of contention between us! Well, I suppose the long years that I spent abroad with Mother, where we traveled at our own pace and Mother was inclined to stay in each place as long as the fancy suited her and then move on to something else -- I was rather spoiled. Of course, my husband is a busy man and he wants to get home and attend to his business and I would like to linger and, I always say, get the flavor of a place. He feels that he gets the flavor more quickly than I do. [Laughter]

ENTERTAINING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

Int: I put World Affairs Council on this list with a question mark because while I know Mr. Fleishhacker is very much involved in it, I didn't know if you --

JCF: I've only been involved in the World Affairs Council in the capacity of his wife. I've enjoyed it enormously, but I've never served on the board, I've never served on a committee, and I've never really had what I could call active participation. During the years that he was president of the World Affairs Council, of course, we were called upon to entertain a great many visitors and I always thoroughly enjoyed that. When we've gone down to the Asilomar Conference, I've participated with him with great enthusiasm in the

JCF: various responsibilities that we've had. I'm sure you've attended those conferences at Asilomar and you know about the cocktail parties and all that kind of thing. But other than that, no, I've never really been actively engaged in the World Affairs Council.

Int: Have you also been involved in other international affairs, or have we hit most of them?

JCF: I think we've hit most of them. Well, yes, the International Industrial Conference, which comes to San Francisco every few years, and I'm sure you're familiar with that, under the auspices of Stanford Research Institute, which is a conference of the leading businessmen of the whole world, a very fascinating thing. I've served several times on hospitality committees in various capacities. I've been chairman of one kind of hospitality or another, and then we always give these big dinner parties.

They have a kind of a system where each person who comes to the conference is invited to a private home for dinner and there's a special night set aside for that. It's beautiful. You weren't aware of that?

Int: No.

JCF: It's marvelous.

Int: I don't believe the newspapers report the conference very closely.

JCF: No, the newspapers really don't report it very much because it is a rather selective group, but they do an extraordinary job of hospitality for these people.

Int: Is that the one that Henry Luce --

JCF: Yes, that's correct. That's the one that Henry Luce was involved in originally. They have always planned a very, very interesting program for everyone involved, and most particularly for the ladies, because the ladies are not attending the plenary sessions and the business conferences that the men are having, and so this has been the kind of thing that I have done with the ladies. I once was head of what was known as the hospitality room. They always maintain an information center for the ladies and they had it manned or womaned by a group of volunteers all very carefully selected, usually women with international interests and language facility and so forth, and they are available to provide all kinds of information and so forth.

JCF: Then I have been chairman of the house tour that I did one year for them, a house and garden tour, that kind of thing.

Then they have a plan so that every person who attends the conference is invited to a home. They set aside one evening of the week, a specific night. It is done a year in advance, and they recruit hostesses with nice homes and the capacity to take care of a number of people and they ask them to entertain these distinguished visitors. There is an obligation upon them, if they accept to entertain the visitors, to have an equal number of San Francisco residents so that there is a mixture of them.

It's a very interesting occasion. You're given an opportunity to state which nationalities you prefer to have, but you don't always get exactly who you want. But that doesn't make any difference. You get a mixture of people and it's a very, very fascinating thing. So I have done that, which is international.

Int: I should ask because I don't believe this came up in Mr. Fleishhacker's interview. He always attends, I presume?

JCF: The business meetings?

Int: Yes.

JCF: No, he very rarely does. He gets tickets for them but he doesn't go. [Laughter] You see, he doesn't consider himself that actively engaged in business and he's not a delegate to it, but he is very interested in the group that comes to dinner. He always enjoys that very much.

Just recently I was asked by the Chamber of Commerce to chair a committee which was involved with the hospitality for the Conference of Japanese Mayors and Presidents of Chambers of Commerce. This was last September, I believe, the early part of September. This is a biannual conference, I think, and this was the first time that it's been held in San Francisco. It's held alternately in the United States and in Japan. It's a Sister City program. The mayors of the Sister Cities of Japan attend and the presidents of the Chamber of Commerce of the Sister Cities.

It was a very interesting conference and they bring their wives. So, I was chairman of hospitality for the ladies on that occasion and that was great fun. We planned all sorts of things to make the ladies feel at home and gave them tours of the city and tours of gardens. We tried to find the things that we thought the Japanese ladies would enjoy doing.

JCF: So, in that connection I am always involved with something of an international nature. Now, when Morty was chairman of the United Nations' Twentieth Anniversary in San Francisco, he took a leaf from the IIC book and planned dinner parties for every ambassador to the United Nations who attended that Twentieth Anniversary Conference; they had dinner parties for everyone. We had U Thant down here in Woodside, a large dinner party for him. So we're always being called upon to entertain foreign visitors. Prince Thani of Thailand has become a great friend of ours. We gave a dinner party for him on one occasion. The State Department rings me up and asks me will I entertain a foreign visitor, so my international interests have been kept alive by my opportunity to be of help to these people. I love doing it. I really do.

TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Int: Another matter -- you mentioned that you'd been active in a tape-recording group of women at Temple Emanu-El.

JCF: Oh, no, that's not quite the thing. It was very interesting, though, because the Sisterhood Guild of Temple Emanu-El about three or four years ago, I think -- I don't believe it was more than three -- it was just the year before Aunt Alice [Levison] passed away. The Sisterhood Guild was looking for an interesting program for their opening session of their winter meetings. They have a monthly meeting of the Guild. That particular year I had been asked to serve on the program committee. I'm not terribly active in the Temple any more and I don't do very much for them, and when they ask me to do something I'm very reluctant to say no.

So I was serving on the committee and we came up with the idea that since it was an era in which reminiscing was so popular with people becoming very nostalgic about the past, that it might be fun to present as the first program this program of reminiscences. So I suggested Aunt Alice because I had seen what she'd done for you* and I knew that she was a great weaver of tales and that the children all loved to sit and listen to her talk. I felt that if she would be willing to do it she would be wonderful.

*Alice Gerstle Levison, Family Reminiscences, op. cit.

JCF: So they recruited a group of women, one of whom had been raised in a ghetto in Poland and had come out as a refugee. Another one had been a member of the only Jewish family to live in Nevada City. Interestingly enough, this was during the war. I didn't realize that there were so few Jews in Nevada City, but this is what she said. It was the only Jewish family. Another was Mrs. Edith Green. I don't know if you know about her, but her maiden name was Solomon. She lives in San Francisco. It's an old San Francisco family, but her antecedents are very, very prominent Sephardic Jews and the Solis Cohn family and her antecedent was in the Revolutionary War. He was known as the Patriot Rabbi and it's a very, very interesting family. Her family and my family had been friends, incidentally, in San Francisco in the early days, but that's aside from the point. She had very delightful reminiscences of her childhood in San Francisco.

Now, each of these ladies was of a different age group and a different background. There was another lady who had grown up in Fargo, I think it was, North Dakota, some middle-western town, and there had been very few Jewish families there. This was all centered around life in a Jewish family as they remembered it.

They asked me if I would be the moderator. They set up a stage. It was only for the Guild membership and their guests, but they do have a stage in the Guild Hall and it was set up with tables and chairs to look like a Victorian parlour and a tea being served. It was not recorded. (I made a recording of a previous one, a sort of a rehearsal, one we did with Aunt Alice, which was fun.) But I questioned them. We were all sitting around having tea and I would say, "Now, Mrs. So-and-So, what do you remember when you were a child? Did you do this or did you do that?" And then she would speak and then the next one would speak. But it was extremely interesting because we found that there was such diversity. There were certain similarities, of course, since there was the similarity of the Jewish tradition in most cases, but there was such diversity of reaction to the community and the community's reaction to them and the way their family life had been carried on, and also life for a young person growing up in that particular area in which they were growing. Aunt Alice, of course, being the elderly lady, her life in San Francisco, describing the sidewalks and going to school and the kind of meals they ate and all, was very, very interesting. It was just an afternoon's entertainment, but I was very grateful for having recorded Aunt Alice in the rehearsal because I've kept it and treasured it.

Int: You had been rather more active in Temple Emanu-El previously, had you not?

JCF: Well, during the time my husband was president I felt I had to be active, yes. [Laughter] I say that just as I mean it. I felt I had to be active. Having had the background that I did from my early childhood of not being particularly closely associated with the Temple, you know, it never had quite that strong a -- I'm ashamed to say it, but it just didn't have that kind of meaning.

ART

Int: The other major field of activity in which you have participated is the arts in San Francisco. Again, I don't know how you might have had time to participate [laughter], but I know you have.

JCF: Well, I was on the women's board of the museum for many, many years and was treasurer.

Int: The San Francisco Museum of Art?

JCF: The San Francisco Museum of Art, yes. I was treasurer at one time and I have been chairman of various committees.

Int: How did you happen to be interested in it in the first place?

JCF: Well, I've always been interested in art and someone asked me to go on the board. It was just as simple as that. That's the way most things happen, isn't it? I think it may have been Elise Haas* who asked me to go on the board. She is still extremely active and has been a very generous patron.

Grace McCann Morley was the director at that time and I stayed on that board for many, many years. I always found it extremely interesting and did what was expected of me and I don't think any more or any less, but I kept up my own. Then at a certain point I became too involved with other things and I felt that I was no longer -- in the first place, I'm a great believer in a change of personnel on things of that kind, and there was at that time no provision for a rotating board. I believe they did change to a rotating board and then went back to something else. I'm not actually certain. But, at any rate, I just decided that the time had come for me to bow out.

I was invited then, because one must be invited, to become an associate board member, which I still am. I attend meetings

*Mrs. Walter A. Haas

JCF: occasionally just to sort of keep au courant with what's going on.

Int: You've had a good view of its activities over quite a span then.

JCF: Yes.

Int: Were you sorry to see Grace McCann Morley leave? Do you think it's taken as good a direction since, or better?

JCF: I think that, as all museums, it's had its great problems and it's had its ups and downs. Grace McCann Morley was a very, very fine curator and not a good director, if you can see the difference. She certainly is a most knowledgeable person in the field of art and I think she was very innovative. She brought a whole new dimension to appreciation of art to San Francisco and she was a great teacher, a teacher not because she knew how to impart what she knew. She was very lacking in that talent in my opinion, but I think most artists are inarticulate. They do not know how to express verbally what they feel visually. I used to often question her because I was a little less susceptible to contemporary art then than I am now. I know that occasionally the accessions committee of the women's board would present -- because we always bought paintings from the funds that we raised to present to the museum. And the accessions committee -- Mrs. Keesling, who is very knowledgeable about art, an extraordinary person, would make a selection with her committee and then it would be brought to the board for their approval.

Some of the things were then, in my opinion, far, far out. I just don't see why or what there was to be seen in them, and at times I expressed myself in no uncertain terms of not approving the purchase. Nevertheless, my judgment was not necessarily the only judgment available and I used to say to Grace Morley, "I am perfectly willing to learn if you can give me some criteria by which I should judge this painting, what merits I should look for in it. I don't want to just dismiss it categorically. If you say it's a fine painting, tell me what is there in it that you find is so good and what should I try to find in it myself?" I never had a satisfactory answer from her. She tried very hard. She was very sincere and she was appreciative of my desire to know. But when I say she wasn't a good teacher, I find this so true of most artists. But, despite that, she certainly brought an extremely interesting collection to the community. She was handicapped by lack of funds and, as you know, she had this contract to travel a great deal. I don't think she was on the job as much as she should have been to have accomplished more than she did accomplish and to accomplish everything that should have been accomplished. But I am a great admirer of hers nevertheless.

JCF: At the time that she left I felt it was the wisest move that the museum could possibly make because administratively she was not succeeding. She did not know how to supervise the staff properly.*

Int: Who succeeded her?

JCF: George Culler. Then George Culler brought certain very good qualities. Now, he was a fine teacher. That was his great forte, as a teacher and lecturer, but I really don't know from the administrative point of view. I know there were some differences of opinion.

Int: We really are more interested in just what each contributed to the Museum.

JCF: Yes. And then following him was the man who's just left. Gerald Nordlund. And he also contributed a great deal in -- I don't want to say revitalizing because he put a new kind of vitality into it. He opened up new rooms.

Of course, there were many factors that entered into all this. The degree of success of these people very often depended upon the cooperation that they got from their board, the funds that were available to them, the possibility of acquiring more space, which is always a problem, and as you know -- Morty's explained that to you -- they finally were -- and Morty had a large share in trying to acquire more space. And all of these things have added tremendously to the enhancement of the Museum.

Int: Every museum director must have more problems than anyone would wish, but I suppose a contemporary art museum director must have more than most because of having to put on shows that really shock some people.

JCF: That is true and I must confess that there have been many shows that have shocked me terribly. I don't like them at all. Some I am perfectly willing to accept even though I don't like them, and others I feel have no place in the world of art and I express myself quite frankly about it.

I can remember at one time attending a meeting when there was an exhibit about to open. It was still behind the screens and was being mounted. I won't describe what was in the show because it

*See also pp. 173-174.

- JCF: was so horribly shocking, and one of the ladies as we left the meeting of the board called me and said, "What are you going to do about this? It's terrible." My husband was no longer president, but he was, of course, still active on the board and her husband was active on the board. She said, "This is simply horrible! We can't allow this to be." We all agreed and some of these more unpleasant things were taken out. They just didn't have any place in a museum of art.
- Int: One of the things that a contemporary art museum has, of course, is a relationship with contemporary artists in the community. That, I thought, Mrs. Morley was particularly good at, was she?
- JCF: I believe she was very good at that, but I wouldn't say that the others are any less good. Now, Mrs. [Francis V.] Keesling has been an outstanding member of the Museum* for more years than you can possibly count, I think from its inception. Of course, Mrs. [Walter A.] Haas we all know. Mrs. Haas has been the great patroness of the Museum after Mrs. [Henry Potter] Russell, who was responsible for founding it with her brother. But Mary Keesling I don't think has put the financial effort into it. She's not in a position to do so. But artistically she has made a tremendous contribution. She was on the women's board many, many years and she is now a member of the board of trustees. She has a great rapport with the artists. She knows them all very well.

They have a program at the Museum now, and I'm sorry to say I've never attended any of these jaunts that they have, but they visit artists' studios about once a month. You're probably aware of that. They send out these announcements of studio-going tours, as they call them, and offer an opportunity to the members of meeting the artists. Rena Bransten is on the board and she has great friendship with the artists. I think she is something of an artist herself, in an amateur way but nevertheless has artistic talent. Mrs. Philip Lilienthal, who has always been very active on the board, is a practicing artist and a successful one. People like that know the artists, and they bring the artists to the social occasions and so forth. But in recent years I haven't been involved with any of that. I go and look at the pictures and go to the social occasions, but I'm too busy with other things.

In the first place, you see, I've developed a tremendous interest in recent years in Asian art, which has nothing to do with the San Francisco Museum.

*First the Women's Board, now the Board of Trustees. JCF

Int: You have been active, then, in the Brundage collection?

JCF: I haven't been what you would call too active because I'm not a docent. But I have audited the docent classes for the last five years.

Int: Were you a participant in getting Mr. Avery Brundage to give his collection?

JCF: No. I wish I had been. Only to the degree of writing letters to people to support the bond issue and that kind of thing, but I only met Mr. Brundage after it was a fait accompli.

Int: I guess a small group of women really did that.

JCF: Mrs. Paul Bissinger* and Mrs. Carl Stern, I think, really almost single-handedly, and George Christopher, put that over.

Int: Amazing.

JCF: Yes. Just remarkable. I respond emotionally to the Asian thing. I just love them. Having been fortunate enough to visit Asia several times in recent years, I just love it. I constantly want to know more and more and more about Asian art and it's a very profound subject. I don't know very much about it, I must say, but I am trying hard to learn.

MUSIC

Int: Have you been active in the Symphony Association?

JCF: I have been involved for many, many, many years -- I can't even remember how long -- in what is known as the Women's Public Interest Committee. It's a very large committee of the San Francisco Symphony Association, and that is a committee that has put on the Black and White Balls over the years, the fund raising activities, the selling during the years when it was difficult to dispose of tickets. Now, of course, tickets are in demand, but during the years when we were trying very hard to fill the Opera House, the selling of tickets and promoting and encouraging, I was active. I've always been active. I still serve on that committee.

*Now Mrs. Robert Sellers. JCF

Int: What have been the factors do you think in attendance at the Symphony? Why as it been sometimes under-subscribed and sometimes over-subscribed?

JCF: Well, I don't know. I think probably quality of orchestra and quality of direction. I would think that's the principal factor. Ozawa has a kind of charisma that appeals tremendously. Krips in his own funny, martinet, German way, or Austrian way, had it too. He developed the orchestra to a very fine degree so that it appealed.

Of course, it's very exciting to me as of 1974 -- and not only in 1974, but of recent years -- to see the interest of youth in good music, in classical music, the numbers of classical records that are sold, the hi-fi's that are playing classical music, the attendance at concerts and at ballet. Ballet, of course, is less easy to get people to and I understand they've been playing to empty houses. Much as I love ballet, I never get there because it doesn't happen to be a form of art that particularly appeals to my husband and so we don't go very often.

But when I first came back from Europe as a young person I was so accustomed to going to concerts constantly. When I was in school in Paris we went to the Opera Comique every week. We went to the Comedie Francaise every week. We went to the opera once or twice a month. We were constantly being exposed to this kind of thing and my mother had always encouraged it in me when I was a child. My husband's family had done it too.

But my friends, my contemporaries, when I came home thought I was out of my mind to want to go to a concert. Of course, the reverse is taking place now when I see my grandson coming across the Bay from Berkeley to go to the concerts and his best girl playing the flute and going to the concerts with him, a nice girl from their high school. We go on Wednesday nights, which is students' night, and it's crowded with young people. I'm a little shocked at the way they dress, although that's changing too. When they come in bare feet and they come in long hair and a little unkempt and the granny dresses, it's not very attractive. But they love the music and I think that's a factor that's played a big role in increasing the attendance at the concerts and also, as I say, the quality of the direction.

Int: Hertz was the director when you first went?

JCF: Alfred Hertz was. I don't believe he was the very first director, but he was the first that I can remember.

Int: And then Monteux?

JCF: Oh, no. We had [Issay] Dobrowen and then there was an Englishman. I'm trying to remember his name. Basil Cameron. I remember a very funny incident. At the time Mr. [J.B.] Levison was the president of the Symphony Association and, as you know, the Levisons and the Fleishhackers lived next door to each other. My mother-in-law had engaged an English butler who had been working in New York for her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wolf. He and his wife wanted to come to San Francisco, so on a visit to New York my parents-in-law had engaged him for their service and he was due to arrive.

So we were all at dinner at their house on Pacific Avenue and the doorbell rang. This very nice man came in and my mother-in-law greeted him as the new butler and she said, "Yes, and your room is upstairs." She was courteous to him, but she treated him as the new domestic servant, and discovered that he was the English conductor who had just arrived and was going to a dinner party next door at the Levisons [laughter] and had come to the wrong house.

Int: [Laughter] That was a great beginning for him in San Francisco!

JCF: Then came [Pierre] Monteux.

Int: He was very popular!

JCF: Yes, indeed, he was! They didn't give nearly as many concerts. They didn't have the union contracts that were so important. The orchestra wasn't as demanding of as many concerts. All of that has played a big role, of course, in the development of the orchestra too. But Monteux was terribly popular and then, oh, I think any conductor starts to pall after too many years. Each conductor has his limitations. He must. He wouldn't be human if he didn't. You just get tired of the same old face and the same old back with the hand waving in the air. [Laughter]

Int: [Laughter] The Opera Association?

JCF: No, I've never been involved in the Opera Association. I love the opera and we've been going for fifty years, but I've never been involved in it.

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND ACT

Int: Are there others of the arts that you have participated in? I have on my list the Children's Theatre Association --

JCF: Well, I was one of the founders of the Children's Theatre Association and that's some many years ago -- 1933, '34, or '35, something like that.

Int: How did you happen to be a founder?

JCF: It was a group of women who decided they wanted to present plays for youngsters. That was the basic idea of it and Mrs. Ward Maillard, who subsequently passed away, and Mrs. Churchill Peters and Mrs. Parks -- she was Leah Caligaris at the time and she subsequently married. I can't remember what her husband's name is, Mr. Parks. I spoke to her on the phone just the other day. A whole group of us got together and started this Children's Theatre and we put on plays in Norse Hall.

Int: Oh, that's a difficult place --

JCF: It's a difficult theatre in which to put on plays, but we put on plays for children and raised funds. Then I remember, as is always true of any activity of this kind, the raising of the funds is the most difficult and most arduous task and the most important one. We wanted to be able to offer tickets at a minimal price and also to be able to give gift tickets away to deserving children.

I remember when the Ice Follies first came to San Francisco they opened and someone -- I don't know who -- made the first approach. But somehow or other they got together. I had nothing to do with the planning of it. [Tape off for telephone interruption.] So, at any rate, whoever was responsible for getting these two organizations together, the Children's Theatre Association sponsored the opening night of the Ice Follies and it was a very successful venture. Of course, they were anxious to become known in the community and we helped sell tickets for them, so we got a nice amount of money out of that, a percentage I suppose it was, and subsequent to that every year the Children's Theatre Association sponsored the opening of the Ice Follies for many, many, many years.

I haven't had anything to do with the Children's Theatre Association for many years, but I know it's still an ongoing project. They've just recently had a fund raising affair at the Mark Hopkins Hotel which I did not attend, but I loaned them my scrapbook of old

JCF: pictures. It was very, very successful, I understand. They raised a nice sum of money that has helped them very much. Mrs. Guido Severi is very active in that now.

Int: Are there other organizations or activities in this general area that we haven't discussed?

JCF: In the area of the arts? Not that I can think of where I have been particularly active. I've always been tremendously interested in cultural activities, if you can call them that, and from time to time I am called upon to participate in something, but nothing that I can think of that I've been very deeply involved in.

Int: You've been an actress. Have you been a painter?

JCF: No. I don't envy many people many things, but the ability to be creative is something I envy anyone who has it. I always think I would like to paint and I know so well that I can't. I don't dare try! [Chuckle] I start and stop with needlework. It's great fun and I love doing it. I do a lot of needlework.

Int: I should ask about ACT. I know Mr. Fleishhacker has been extremely active in it and helpful to it.

JCF: Yes, yes.

Int: Have you been more than a participant with him?

JCF: No, I really haven't. I've been a very eager participant with him and we've done lots of things to -- of course, the night that they decided they wanted to come to San Francisco was a wonderful experience when they came up here, and I think my husband told you that he got to know them better when they were down at Stanford, down making this film, down in one of the homes in this area.* A young man, Hank Krantzler, whom we knew was the official photographer. He was a local chap, but he was the official photographer for them and still does do a great deal of their photography. One day when we were over there watching the filming he said, "You know, I've been telling these people they think this estate is so beautiful but they haven't seen yours. I'd love them to see yours." We said, "By all means, bring them over." So they said they had been shooting the film all day. It was a very hot day and they were very tired. They had many frustrations in connection with the shooting of the film because it was a

*See p. 183.

JCF: turn of the century film placed in that era and there were airplanes flying overhead. It was right in a flight path. They were shooting out of doors and they had to stop it every time a plane went by because, of course, it was completely out of character for the film to have the sound of a droning plane. So they were exhausted.

We said, "By all means, when you're through shooting come over." They didn't come and they didn't come. We had a very simple dinner by ourselves and it was one of those end-of-the-weekend occasions when we had nothing much in the way of food in the house. We had our dinner and I had not planned for a large group of people. At about eight o'clock they phoned: "We're through shooting. We're exhausted. Can we come over?" We said, "Certainly."

So they arrived en masse and we found they hadn't had any dinner. Morty said to me, "Do we have anything in the house?" I said, "I don't know whether we do or not." [Laughter] So he said, "I'll go up to the swimming pool and I'll see if we've got any hot dogs, and you go into the kitchen and see what you've got." Well, to make a very long story short, we dug up every hot dog that we had in the place and every piece of cheese that we had in the place and the cook whipped up a few salads and I think we found a cold chicken in the fridge. We served them food up at the pool and they all went swimming. It was a warm, warm evening and they relaxed beautifully. They sat around until all hours.

At one point, one of the young men who is no longer with the company and whose name I don't recall said to me, "You know, this is such a perfect evening. I'm having such a good time and I'm so relaxed. If I didn't think I'd shock you, I'd go skinny dipping." I said, "You know, I'm an old woman and I've got children and grandchildren and nothing shocks me! Go skinny dipping if you want to. I couldn't care less," with which he immediately stripped to the buff and jumped in the pool and several others followed suit. They were very circumspect about it. They jumped in quickly and they got out the other side and wrapped themselves in towels, but it didn't bother any of us, you know. It was an artistic group of people.

I was told afterwards that when they left they said, "Well, if this is the atmosphere of San Francisco, this is where we want to stay."

Int: I should think so. [Laughter]

JCF: Well, to answer your question really, I haven't been active except that I've tried through all my married life to be supportive of everything my husband has done. When I read my husband's biography,

JCF: curriculum vitae, and I recall many of the things that I'd forgotten, as a matter of fact, I realize how active he's been. My own little effort amounts to so little that I'm embarrassed that you should even bother to ask me about it [laughter], except that I love to talk, as you've discovered.

Int: And it's a very interesting and very constructive group of activities you describe.

THE FLEISHHACKER CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Int: We've, I think, asked you about your family earlier. We should ask you to put something on the record about your children.

JCF: Delia was born in 1930, on September the 20th. (We have a lot of Virgos in our family. I'm a Virgo. My mother was and my son is. So is one of our granddaughters.) She's married to John Ehrlich, who is the son of Mr. Philip S. Ehrlich. She was a very difficult young lady to raise, which she freely admits herself, and I think she is one of the finest young women I know now today. I had nothing to do with it. She just turned out that way. She's quite a remarkable person. She's bright and alert and vital and interesting and very, very active in the community, very active.

Int: In the same sort of affairs in which you've been active?

JCF: To a degree, but she had the tragedy of losing two children and adopting to take their place, and she has two of her own. That's a long, involved story.

Int: Two of her own and two adopted?

JCF: Two of her own and two adopted. So she's been tremendously interested in matters pertaining to retarded and handicapped children and adoption programs, and her husband also. She has been on the board of the Florence Crittenton Home. She was on the auxiliary originally. She was president of the auxiliary of the Florence Crittenton Home at one time. She is the current president of the local chapter of WAIF* and

*The Children's Division of Travelers Aid International Social Service of America.



The Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr. family at their summer home, Greengables, in Woodside. 1974.

Standing, left to right: Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr.; Mrs. Mortimer (Janet) Fleishhacker, Jr.; Mrs. John (Delia Fleishhacker) Ehrlich; John Ehrlich; Jill Ehrlich; John (Nick) Ehrlich, Jr.; Joan Delia (Jodi) Ehrlich; Mortimer Fleishhacker, III; Leslie (Penny) Fleishhacker; Mrs. Mortimer (Francoise) Fleishhacker, III; Mrs. David (Victoria) Fleishhacker; David Fleishhacker. Children standing: William Montgomery Fleishhacker; Eleanor Delia (Edie) Fleishhacker. Seated, left to right: Jamie Ehrlich; Marc Fleishhacker; Sandra Fleishhacker.

JCF: she has been on the board of the Children's Home Society. She's very, very interested in things pertaining to children.

She is a great opera buff and she is very, very active in the Opera Guild. I really can't keep track of most of her activities because half the time I'm telling her, "Why don't you cut down on what you're doing? You're doing too much." But she has four very nice children. Her daughter Jody will be twenty-one in July. Her first child was named after me, Janet. She was the one who died. Then Jody came along very shortly afterwards and Jody's a great gal. She's in her senior year at the University of California. She went to Vassar for two years and then decided to transfer out here to be closer to home. She's a good student. She's a nice child.

Then Nicky is her natural child and he is nineteen and a half. He was born on December 24, 1954. The reason he's Nicky -- his name is John Jr., but he is Nicky because he was born on Christmas Eve.

Then she had Jeffrey, and Jeffrey was afflicted with the same condition that Janet had and he died at the age of eighteen months. It was following that that she adopted Jill, who will be seventeen on the 27th, I think it is, of June. Then two years later she adopted Jamie. They were both five days old when they were adopted. Jamie will be fifteen on the 14th of July. He's a Bastille Day baby. So, that's John and Delia and their family.

In the spring of 1969 Delia and her husband John took their four children, left here in early May or late April, and went abroad and traveled during the whole summer period very extensively in Scandinavia and England and France. I don't remember just which countries they covered the first year, but then in the fall they went to Switzerland by prearrangement. The plans had all been made in advance, of course. The four children went to four different schools in Switzerland and they stayed there for the whole winter. They skied a great deal and they learned French quite fluently and it was a very fine experience for them.

In the mean time, Delia and John went down to Rome and took a small apartment which they used as a sort of a pied à terre and made it their headquarters to go and come on trips. They went to Africa and they did a lot of traveling. During the vacation periods they had the children with them. They took them to the Greek islands for Easter. They had Christmas in Rome and then took them to North Africa, I think, for New Years. But anyway, they had much interesting

JCF: travel. Then at the end of the school year they again traveled and covered the places they had not yet seen and came home in late August of that year in time for the new school year in America.

At the same time, our next child, Mortimer III, who was born on September 5, 1932, and was married to Francoise Gamburg, who was born in Paris of a French father and a San Francisco mother --

Int: Whom you had known?

JCF: I knew Mary Gamburg.* She was Mary Meyer, and her antecedents had been French also, but she was born and raised in San Francisco, and we'd actually gone to Grant School for a while together and our mothers knew each other. Mary had gone abroad at about the same time that I went abroad as a girl, and we'd met in France but we didn't see a great deal of each other there. Our paths did not cross very often. But nevertheless she stayed in France and married Pierre Gamburg, a Frenchman, who had never been in the United States.

Pierre was on the Bourse in Paris and when World War II broke out he was called to his regiment like all good Frenchmen. He was an officer in the French army and was shortly thereafter taken prisoner of war. He spent four years in the German prisoner of war camp. Fortunately, it was not a concentration camp because he was taken as an officer, as a military man, not as a Jew. He was not treated too well, but he was treated less badly than a civilian would have been treated. He came out of it, incidentally, weighing ninety pounds.

But when it became apparent that France was falling and there was danger, Mary took Frannie, who was then about seven years old, and came out to her San Francisco connections through Spain and Portugal. We, of course, having known her, our friendship started all over again and Mort and Frannie met in San Francisco, not through us. They were part of the young group that met, and they were married. She's a beautiful girl and a lovely girl, a charming girl. This is the girl I spoke of before who was the first Jewish member of the Junior League.

They have three children. Penny was called Penny because she was born in Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland when her father was doing his army service and she didn't cost him a penny. [Laughter] Her name is really Leslie, but she's never been known as anything but Penny. The second one is Sandra, who is known to us as Sandi. Penny will be seventeen on the first of August. Sandi -- you know, with all the grandchildren I have, I have to stop and think

*See p. 311.

JCF: about birthdays [laughter] -- Sandi will be fifteen on the 22nd of November. She was born on the day of the Big Game, so it was at that time. Marc just turned twelve on the 11th of February, a very bright little boy.

They left in May of 1970, which was the year following the year that Delia and John had left. Delia and John were still abroad at the time. They took their children to Europe. They traveled by a slightly different route. They traveled by ship from San Francisco through the Canal and arrived in France immediately and traveled just very much the same as Delia and John traveled in Europe through the summer months. Then they met Delia and John and their four children. All the two families got together in August in Holland, in Amsterdam, and had a reunion so that they would all see one another. Then Delia and John left from there and came home. I don't know whether they came directly home, but at least they were on their way home. No, they went to Dublin to the horse show, that's right.

Morty and Frannie went up to Switzerland and placed Penny in Mont Choisi at Lausanne and then took the other two children, who were younger, of course, down to Florence where they took a small apartment and put the children in school in Florence and spent the winter in Florence. So the children learned some Italian, although their Italian is not too good. They did learn some Italian and the parents learned some Italian, which they're continuing to learn. They're studying it right now.

So they had a winter in Florence. Of course, having the two children with them, they were not as free to travel as Delia and John had been. They did travel a little bit. They had people with whom they could leave them from time to time, but their traveling was not as extensive.

We went over, incidentally, and saw them while they were there. We went over and saw Delia and John while they were there too. At the end of their school year they also traveled until August and came home and the children went to school here.

David was born on the 30th of May -- he had his thirty-seventh birthday yesterday -- 1937. I remember very well when he was born. He was born just a few days after the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. He was imminent, and at the ceremonies of the Bridge everyone was crossing, everyone but the children who were small. My older children were small then and were terribly anxious to go across the bridge and Mommy just didn't dare venture across that bridge for fear

JCF: she might not get back in time. So we always remember David's birthday very, very well.

He is married to Victoria Escamilla, whose father is Dr. Robert Escamilla. Bob Escamilla was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, but his mother was an American. His father was a Mexican. Vicky is a darling and they have two children. William Montgomery is named after his mother's maternal grandfather, Dr. William Montgomery. We call him Wim and he was six in April, on the seventeenth of April. And Edie, who is Eleanor Delia, called Edie. I should mention that our daughter Delia is Joan Delia, but she has always been called Delia after her Great Grandma Delia. Her daughter Jody is Joan Delia, called Jody, and David's daughter is Eleanor Delia after Morty's sister and the Delia of the family, and she's called Edie. She was born on the 3rd of September. She is three and a half; she will be four on the 3rd of September. She's adorable. She's a minx.

Harroun: You have quite a range.

JCF: Yes, we do, from twenty-one to three, which is great, great fun. Of course, they all have their houses right here on this property, which is terribly nice for us.

Int: What do your sons do? I think I know, but will you --

JCF: Well, our oldest son is in the -- I don't know how to describe it. I think my husband describes it better than I. He's in the building management business, real estate business, all kinds of venturesome things. The younger son, David, was in the Peace Corps, you know, in Afghanistan for two years and has always been inclined to the teaching profession and seems to be very good at it. He is the headmaster of Miss Burke's School.

Harroun: He's quite involved in the Historical Society.

JCF: He's on the board of the California Historical Society, that is correct. He's very interested in history.

Int: You've given your children familiarity with quite a wide range to choose from.

JCF: Yes. Well, they're all involved. Every one of them is involved. I told you what Delia does. Her husband is very involved on various boards -- Community Effort for Disturbed Children, Aid to Retarded Children, Recreation for the Handicapped. He was very involved in that for a long time. I can't keep track of all of his activities.

JCF: Mort is -- incidentally, we differentiate between my husband and my son. My husband is Morty and the son is Mort.

Int: How did they differentiate between your husband and his father?

JCF: His father was always Mortimer.

Int: I thought he was "Uncle Morty" to the Levison boys.

JCF: He was Uncle Morty, yes. I don't know. Of course, he was always Pop to us, and now my husband is Pop to the children. There didn't seem to be that much difficulty. But we've always called young Morty, Mort. It's just natural with us to do that. Some people call my husband Mort, but in the family it's always Mort and Morty, and we know exactly whom we're speaking of.

Mort is very interested in politics. He's been very active in Republican politics in a minor capacity, but nevertheless tremendously interested. He's the campaign manager or chairman or whatever they call it of one of the candidates at the moment, and he's always been involved in some phase of Republican politics. He's on the board of the Jewish Family Service Agency, which I was once on the board of, if you'll remember. He has been and so far as I know may still be on the board of the Jewish Community Center. He was for a long time a member of the Guardsmen and, I think, on their board. He was on the board of Big Brothers. I don't really know what else he does, but I know he is very active. Of course, as you know, Frannie has been Junior League, Children's Hospital, and all that sort of thing.

David is very interested in the California Historical Society, in Young Audiences. When you have so many children and so many activities -- I just don't keep track of them all. [Laughter] But I do know that they are all involved, every one of them. Vicky is a member of the Junior League and she is very active in the Community Music School, which just happens to have been partly founded and very much helped by Morty's mother. They're both very much interested in the Merola Fund. I think David may be on the board of that, as far as I know. A lot of musical things. Vicky is interested in the Ballet Guild. They all have a lot of interests. And the two girls, Delia and Frannie, are both on the same Symphony committee that I'm on. Both serve on that same committee.

So, I think that it's possible to inspire one's children to be participating members of society by example. I don't think by preaching. I don't think you can tell your children what to do, but I think children who see parents have a rewarding life and a happy

JCF: life and a compatible life and have enough judgment to realize that it's largely as a result of their being involved in the community and having interests other than themselves that make them happy and make them contented, they can't help but follow suit. It's kind of an example to them. But the mother who sits by the bridge table all day long, gets up late for breakfast, or doesn't get up for breakfast at all and gets up late in the day and is looking around for something to do with her time certainly can't be of much inspiration to a child. But when a child sees a mother who -- and I don't mean to minimize just the normal household duties -- I think the child who sees a mother involved with her home and her household is inspired by that kind of an example as well. But I think many of the young people who go astray do so -- it isn't always true, of course, because you can't make sweeping statements and generalizations about anything -- but many of the young people who go astray do so because they have not been given any good examples to follow.

Int: That and nobody home.

JCF: And no one to emulate. No one at home, no one to emulate.

Int: This has been a very interesting interview. We thank you very much for being willing to talk so long.

JCF: Well, thank you for being so willing to listen.

Transcriber: Marilyn White
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